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ABSTRACT

This report contains a description and an analysis of the process through which Nebraska State government establishes policy for its public elementary and secondary schools. The report focuses on the role and the impact of the various actors, official and unofficial, who become involved at the State level in setting public school policy. The data came from investigating the way in which three recent education decisions -- one each in the areas of school finance, teacher certification, and educational planning and evaluation -- were determined and from obtaining the perceptions of the influence relationships characterizing the operation of the State education policy system held by a cross-section of participants. In late 1972 and early 1973, formal interviews were conducted with major policy actors including the Governor, members of the Governor's staff, legislative leaders, the Commissioner of Education, members of the State Board of Education, staff members of the State Department of Education, and leaders of the education interest groups. Although policy actors and their relationships are the primary concerns of this study, a brief statement of the socioeconomic, political, and institutional context is set forth. (Author)

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STATE POLICY MAKING FOR THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NEBRASKA

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This report is one of twelve case studies growing out of the Educational Governance Project. In addition, two major reports, a comparative analysis across states and an explication of alternative models of state governance of education, are in preparation. The Governance Project began in January, 1972 and is to be completed in August, 1974. The work was funded by the U.S. Office of Education under Title V (Section 505) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (OEG-0-73-0499). The Policy Board for the Project was composed of three chief state school officers: Martin W. Essex of Ohio, Jack P. Nix of Georgia, and Ewald B. Nyquist of New York, with the State of Ohio serving as fiscal agent. An Advisory Committee composed of eleven persons concerned with general and educational governance also served the project. Contract for the work was let to the College of Education, The Ohio State University and Roald F. Campbell and Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr. were the directors.

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July, 1974

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Introduction

This report contains a description and an analysis of the process through which Nebraska state government establishes policy for its public elementary and secondary schools. We have assumed that this process is affected by many factors, including the demands arising from population changes; the availability of fiscal and human resources; the traditions of the political system and its institutional arrangements; the power of individuals and groups who represent private interests; the preferences of government officials; and the structures of influence that develop among decision makers.

The time and money available for the research prevented an in-depth study of all such factors. The focus, instead, is on the role and impact of the various actors, official and unofficial, who become involved at the state level in setting public school policy. Our data came from investigating the way in which three recent education decisions were determined and from obtaining the perceptions that a cross-section of participants have of the influence relationships characterizing the operation of the state education policy system. In late 1972 and early 1973 formal interviews were held with major policy actors including the Governor, members of the Governor's staff, legislative leaders, the Commissioner of Education, members of the State Board of Education, staff members of the State Department of Education, and leaders of the education interest groups.

Policy actors and their relationships, then, are the primary concerns of this study. Yet policy making cannot be understood apart from the setting in which it occurs. A brief treatment, therefore, of the socioeconomic, political, and institutional context is set forth.

SECTION I

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

The purpose of this initial section is to give consideration to the context within which the state educational policy systems function in Nebraska. Attention will be given to the socioeconomic and political culture characteristics of Nebraska.

Socioeconomic Factors

Since the turn of the century, Nebraska's population has remained relatively stable in absolute numbers. Table I contrasts Nebraska's slight population increases in absolute numbers since 1890 to the sharp increases experienced by the United States in general for the same time periods. According to 1970 census figures, 96.6 per cent (1,432,867) of Nebraska's population was white, 2.7 per cent (39,911) was black, 0.4 per cent (6,624) was Indian, 0.3 per cent (4,091) was other minority groups.

TABLE I

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE U. S. AND NEBRASKA
1890 - 1970

Year	United States	Nebraska
1890	62,947,714	1,062,658
1900	75,094,575	1,066,300
1910	91,972,256	1,192,214
1920	105,710,620	1,296,372
1930	122,775,046	1,377,863
1940	131,669,275	1,315,834
1950	150,697,381	1,325,610
1960	179,323,175	1,411,921
1970	203,184,772	1,483,772

SOURCE: 1970 Census of the Population, Bureau of the Census

From 1960 to 1970, Nebraska's total population increased by 72,163 people or 5.1 per cent. In that period, the black population increased by 36.4 per cent, while the white population increased only 4.2 per cent. This large percentage increase in the black population was partly due to a high rate of in-migration of blacks from the South. Table 2 shows the birth places of Nebraska's native population in 1970. The figures indicate that the majority (73.1 per cent) of Nebraska's white population was born in the state, but less than half (48.7 per cent) of Nebraska's minority population was born in the state.

TABLE 2

PLACE OF BIRTH OF NATIVE POPULATION, 1970

Place of Birth	Per Cent White	Per Cent Black and Other Races
Born in the State	73.1%	48.7%
Born Outside the State		
Northeast	1.5%	1.4%
North Central	15.1%	11.2%
South	3.1%	25.3%
West	3.6%	2.6%

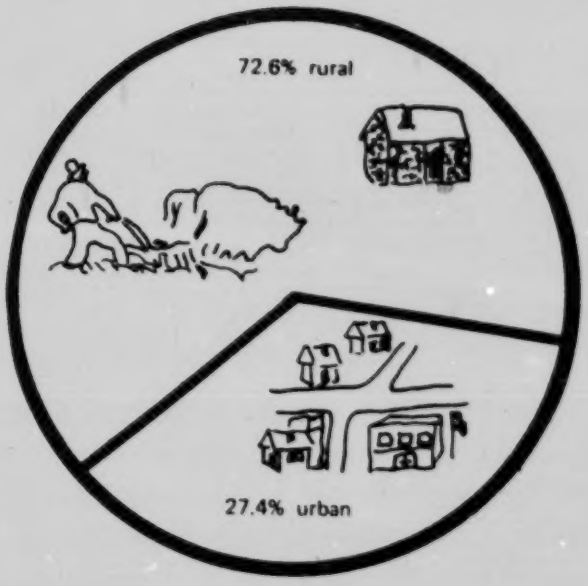
SOURCE: 1970 Census of the Population, Bureau of the Census.

In 1970, 61.5 per cent (912,977 people) lived in urban areas which was an increase of 19.1 per cent over 1960. Furthermore, 78 per cent of Nebraska's total population lived in the eastern third of the state where the two largest cities, Omaha (491,776) and Lincoln (153,443) were located. Figure 1 graphically displays Nebraska's population shift from rural to urban communities since 1890.

Figure 1

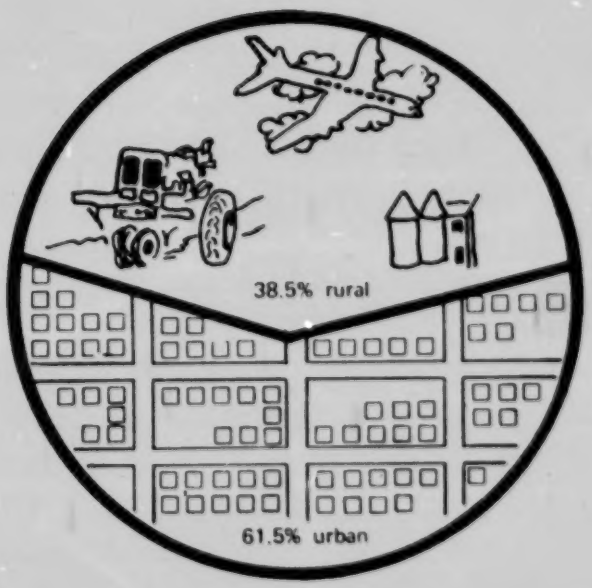
Rural to Urban Population Shift

1890



Rural: towns smaller than 2,500 population including surrounding countryside

1970



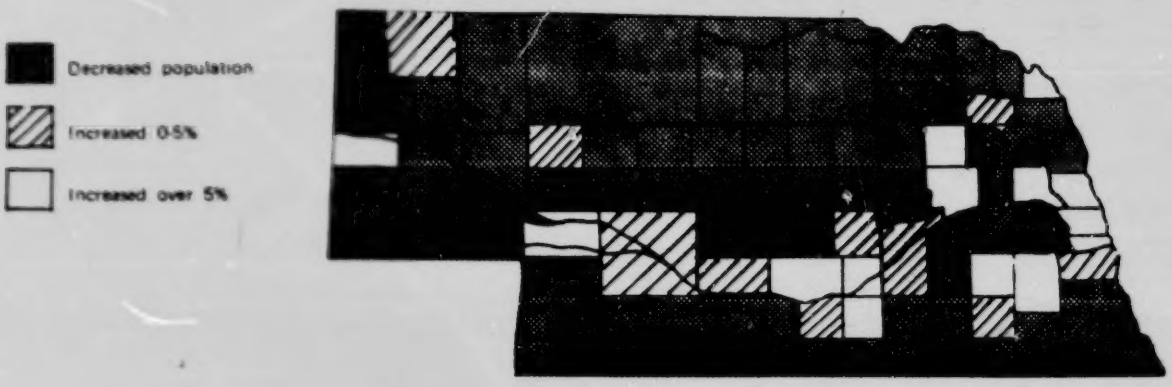
Urban: cities and towns larger than 2,500 population

SOURCE: Nebraska Department of Education: Field Services Section

While Nebraska enjoyed a 5.1 per cent increase in total population from 1960 to 1970, 67 of Nebraska's 93 counties experienced a population decrease. The 67 counties which had population decreases were generally rural counties, while urban counties experienced the increases in population. Figure 2 pictorially indicates Nebraska's population shift from rural counties to urban counties.

Figure 2

Population Increases and Decreases
by County, 1960-1970



SOURCE: Nebraska Department of Education: Field Services Section

Census data showed that Nebraskans, 25 years and older, had increased their educational attainment between 1960 and 1970. In 1970, the median school years completed was 12.2 compared to a median of 11.6 in 1960. Whites had a 12.3 median school years completed in 1970, while blacks and other minorities had a median of 11.3 completed school years. Table 3 contrasts the years of school completed between the 1960 and 1970 census reports for persons 25 years and older by race. In each case, whites and blacks and minorities increased the number of school years completed between 1960 and 1970, but whites still completed more years of school than blacks and other minorities.

TABLE 3

YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED, 1960 AND 1970

Years of School Completed	Per Cent White	Per Cent Black and Other Races
4 Years High School or More		
1960	48.1%	30.9%
1970	59.7%	43.6%
1 Year College or More		
1960	17.5%	10.3%
1970	22.3%	14.5%
4 Years College or More		
1960	6.8%	4.0%
1970	9.8%	5.8%

SOURCE: 1970 Census of the Population, Bureau of the Census

The median annual income in Nebraska according to 1970 census data was $8,564--well below the United States average of $9,590. Ten per cent of Nebraska's families had incomes less than the poverty level in 1970, while 14.9 per cent of Nebraska's families had incomes over $15,000.

Traditionally, Nebraska has been an agricultural state. However, industry has been playing a more important role in Nebraska's economy in recent years. Using broad occupational categories, 1970 census data indicated that 44.6 per cent of employed Nebraskans were white-collar workers, 28.4 per cent were blue-collar workers, 13.0 per cent were farm workers, and 14.2 per cent were service workers. Viewing employment from select industries, 1970 census data indicated that agriculture, forestry, and fisheries employed 13.7 per cent of the Nebraska work force; manufacturing also employed 13.7 per cent; wholesale and retail trade employed 22.4 per cent; and public administration employed 4.4 per cent. A recent publication from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development emphasized growth of industrial development and employment in Nebraska's economy.

Slightly over 45 per cent of the state's population live in cities above 10,000 population, while less than one-third reside on farms. Manufacturing employment has more than doubled in the past 20 years, while farm employment has decreased from 37.2 per cent of the total Nebraska employment in 1940 to 18.1 per cent in 1970. According to recent figures published by the Nebraska Department of Labor, total nonagricultural employment in Nebraska increased 15.7 per cent, or 65,000 persons, from 415,900 persons in 1965 to 481,300 in 1970. In 1970, manufacturing employment was 85,200 or 17.7 per cent of total nonagricultural employment, a 23.5 per cent increase over the 69,000 employed in manufacturing in 1965. A brief review of the growth of manufacturing over the 1960-1970 period shows manufacturing employment increased 27.5 per cent from 66,800 persons in 1960 to 85,200 persons in 1970. The average weekly earnings of manufacturing employees increased 56.5 per cent from $87.41 to $136.82 in 1970.[1]

Political Culture Factors

The political culture of Nebraska is a rather broad and general area which includes several dimensions. In this section, only those political culture factors most relevant to educational policy making in Nebraska will be discussed. There are two political culture factors which seem relevant to educational policy making in Nebraska. The first factor deals with the political conservatism of Nebraskans and the second deals with the orthodoxy of local control.

Nebraska conservatism stems, in part, from rural-agrarian influences. Only in the last two decades has the majority of Nebraska's population lived in urban areas. However, the Census Bureau classifies a city as urban if its population exceeds 2,500 persons. Nebraska's two largest urban areas

are Omaha (347,328 people in 1970) and Lincoln (149,518 in 1970). After these two urban areas, the population of Nebraska's cities greatly diminishes. In 1970, Grand Island was the third largest urban area (population 31,269) and Hastings was the fourth largest (population 23,580). Of Nebraska's 93 counties, 61 counties had a population of less than 10,000 in 1970. Nebraska also had 538 incorporated villages and cities of which 416 had a population of less than 1,000 each in 1970.

Many state level governmental publications stressed that Nebraska's economy was "less dependent on agriculture and more balanced."[2] However, agriculture remains the most important single element in Nebraska's economy. Agriculture affects the other Nebraska industries. For example, 1970 census figures indicated that 13.7 per cent of the work force was employed in manufacturing industries. However, many manufacturing workers were employed in the agricultural related industries of food (processing) and kindred products (3.6 per cent) and wholesale trade (4.3 per cent). Although 61 per cent of Nebraska's porulation lived in urban areas, the rural-agrarian influence was still quite strong. While there were many towns over 2,500 people, these "urban" cities still had strong rural-agrarian characteristics.

The rural-agrarian conservatism of Nebraskans manifested itself in several ways. Politically, conservative and moderate candidates fare best in Nebraska. In presidential, senate, and congressional elections, Nebraskans have traditionally supported Republican candidates. In 1964, Lyndon Johnson was the first Democratic presidential candidate to carry Nebraska since Franklin Roosevelt in 1936. Johnson received 53 per cent of the vote as compared to Barry Goldwater's 47 per cent. Nebraska voters strongly supported Richard Nixon in his three presidential campaigns. In Nebraska in 1960, Nixon defeated John Kennedy (62 per cent to 38 per cent); in 1968 he

received 60 per cent of the vote as compared to 32 per cent for Hubert Humphrey and 8 per cent for George Wallace; and in 1972 Nixon received 68 per cent of the vote to George McGovern's 32 per cent.[3]

Although Nebraska is the home state of such notable progressive and liberal politicians as William Jennings Bryan and Senator George Norris, Nebraskans have overwhelmingly supported conservative Republicans in senatorial and congressional races. In 1972, both of Nebraska's senators--Roman Lee Hruska and Carl T. Curtis--were Republicans as were all three of Nebraska's congressional representatives--Charles Thone, John McCallister, and David Martin. However, it would be erroneous to assume that Nebraskans automatically support Republican candidates, rather they support moderate conservatives.

Presidential elections may suggest that Nebraskans vote for the candidate rather than the party designation. Neither Barry Goldwater in 1964, George Wallace in 1968, nor George McGovern in 1972 fared well. In gubernatorial elections, the trend to support moderate to conservative candidates is clearer. In 1970, Nebraskans chose Democrat J. J. Exon as Governor over Republican incumbent Norbert T. Tiemann. Political observers stated that Exon presented a more conservative image than Tiemann on such crucial issues as state government spending and financial support of schools. In contrast to Republican dominance in presidential, senate, and congressional races, Democrats have done much better in gubernatorial elections in Nebraska. State legislators are non-partisan, and although some observers suggest that Governor Exon has begun to politicize the legislature, in the past it has generally been quite difficult to determine the voter's party preference in the state legislature.

In voter registration, Republicans have a slight edge over Democrats. In the 1972 general election, 364,679 voters (51 per cent) were registered

as Republican, 321,612 voters (45 per cent) were registered as Democrats, and 25,229 (4 per cent) were registered as Independents.[4] While Republican voters made up 51 per cent of all registered voters, the percentage difference between registered Republicans and Democrats was not as great as one might suspect.

A second political culture factor deals with local control. The predominance of local control can clearly be seen in the structure of local school districts. Nebraska ranked 36th nationally in population in 1970, but first in the number of school districts. As of September, 1972, Nebraska had 1,332 local school districts.

Table 4 shows a rank order of the states in the Governance Project by total number of local school districts for the 1971-1972 school year. While Nebraska has always had an inordinately high number of local school districts, over 5,000 local school districts were either eliminated or consolidated in the years since 1949. Table 5 demonstrates this reduction in local districts.

TABLE 4

RANK ORDER OF STATES IN GOVERNANCE PROJECT BY TOTAL NUMBER OF LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 1971-1972 SCHOOL YEAR

State	Number of Districts	Rank
Nebraska	1,332	1
Texas	1,167	2
California	1,117	4
New York	756	5
Michigan	620	10
Wisconsin	444	14
Minnesota	443	15
Massachusetts	430	16
Georgia	188	28
Colorado	181	29
Tennessee	147	34
Florida	67	41

SOURCE: "A Statistical Report of School Districts in Nebraska," Nebraska Department of Education, 1972.

TABLE 5

REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
IN NEBRASKA, 1949-1972

Year	Number of Districts
1949	6,734
1952	6,363
1955	5,686
1958	4,442
1961	3,272
1964	2,701
1967	2,172
1970	1,478
1972	1,332

SOURCE: "A Statistical Report of School Districts in Nebraska," Nebraska Department of Education, 1972.

Nebraska's rural-agrarian influence certainly explains part of the reason for so many local districts. However, no other state of comparable size or population has nearly as many local districts as Nebraska. For whatever reasons, there developed a concern for local control which manifested itself in local control of schools, of other governmental units, and of government spending. Interviewed government officials used a litany of phrases frequently referring to "the people back home."

As school district consolidation and reorganization reduced the number of local school districts, local control of schools became a key issue. A state-level organization--the Nebraska School Improvement Association (NSIA)--was created to represent the smaller school districts. NSIA was composed of school board members and some parents from school districts with a population under 2,500 people. The NSIA was influential with the State Board of Education throughout the 1960s. NSIA also became very active in supporting conservative candidates for the State Board of Education. The NSIA was quite successful in helping candidates sympathetic to protecting

small school districts win State Board of Education seats. From the middle 1960s through the early 1970s, NSIA supported candidates who either constituted a majority or at least half of Nebraska's eight-member State Board of Education. A common theme that NSIA-supported candidates campaigned on was the need to protect the local control of schools.

SECTION II

THE STRUCTURE FOR STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY MAKING

In considering the structure for state educational policy making in Nebraska, we shall include five agencies and organizations: (1) the Governor; (2) the State Legislature; (3) the State Board of Education; (4) the Commissioner of Education and the State Department of Education; and (5) educational interest groups. Structural features of education and government relative to the five areas of concern will be discussed in this section to provide additional understanding of the context of educational policy making in Nebraska.

The Governor

According to the Constitution of the State of Nebraska, "the supreme executive power of the state is vested in the Governor and it is his duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed and the affairs of the state efficiently and economically administered."[5]

The Governor is the chief budget officer of the state and pursuant to this office, is required to present to the Legislature a complete budget of all expenditures for the running of the state's regular business. The Legislature may appropriate more money for any given purpose than the Governor recommends only by a three-fifths vote of the Legislature.[6] This three-fifths requirement is indeed a formidable one and places with the Governor of the state marked control over state spending.

Prior to 1966, the Governor was elected to a two-year term of office. A constitutional amendment, approved by the voters of the state, provided that at the general election of November 1966, the Governor shall be elected to a four-year term of office.[7] To this date, only two Governors of Nebraska have served

four-year terms--Norbert T. Tiemann, a Republican and the present Governor, J.J. Exon, a Democrat. Advocates of the change in the Governor's term of office contended that two years was an inadequate amount of time for any Governor to effectively develop and implement legislative programs.

One means of assessing a governor's strength is an evaluation of his formal powers. Schlesinger, in 1971, devised an index of the formal powers of governors, on which Nebraska and five other states--North Dakota, Kentucky, Virginia, Montana, and Connecticut--received sixteen points on a scale ranging from seven (limited powers) to twenty (extensive powers) points.[8] Twenty-three other states received point totals above fifteen, so one might conclude that the formal powers of the Governor of Nebraska are about average. This index was comprised of several categories including tenure potential, appointive powers, budget power, and veto power. In the area of tenure potential, Nebraska received 4 or a possible 5 points on the basis that a Nebraska governor enjoys a four-year term of office and is permitted one re-election. In the area of appointive powers, Nebraska received 3 or a possible 5 points. This assessment was make in light of the requirement that the governor's appointments to sixteen major offices within state government must be approved by the Legislature. Nebraska received 4 of a possible 5 points in terms of the governor's budget powers in that the governor, in 1971, shared the responsibility for budget preparation with persons appointed by someone else. Since 1971, the Legislature has granted full responsibility for budget preparation to the governor and his staff. Consequently, it can be surmised that if Schlesinger's study were to be updated to 1974, Nebraska might well receive 5 or a possible 5 points in this area of budget preparation. In the area of veto powers, Nebraska received 5 of a possible 5 points in that the Nebraska governor has item veto power plus a need for three-fifths of the

Legislature to override his veto. The Governor's veto power relative to state monies available for elementary and secondary education in the state were especially significant during the 1973 legislative session and this issue will be discussed in Section III of this study. In summary, Schlesinger's study suggests that the Governor has considerable power in the areas of budget preparation, tenure potential, and veto power but in the area of appointment powers, the Legislature has considerable control over the Chief Executive.

Persons selected for interview during the conduct of this study quite consistently pointed out that the present Governor campaigned for the 1970 gubernatorial election on a platform, which in great part, was a commitment to "holding the line on taxes." Six of the seven state legislators interviewed suggested that Governor Exon had not given the public schools, including school finance, top priority in his legislative program. Comments from the Legislator-respondents relative to this major campaign platform and the absence of public education considerations as top priority items in the Governor's legislative program were:

--The Legislature hasn't seen a program from him on education.

--The Governor definitely has not emphasized any educational issues. The Governor campaigned on the basis of no tax increases.

--The Governor has emphasized a need for property tax relief.

--The Governor has emphasized holding the line on taxes and no new spending. He has had negative influence. He has defeated efforts to increase state aid to education.

The one Legislator who did believe that the Governor had given public schools, including school finance, a top priority in his legislative program further explained:

--Although the Governor did not have his own school aid bill, he was against the 1377 bill (to increase state aid to elementary and secondary schools from $35 million to $160 million) because it did not provide property tax relief. This affected education.

Three of four respondents representing the major education interest groups of the state (Nebraska School Boards Association, Nebraska State Education Association, Nebraska School Improvement Association, Nebraska Council of School Administrators) indicated that the Governor had not emphasized his views on education in his legislative program. One respondent answered "yes" to this question. All respondents from the education interest groups commented, in some manner, about the Governor's interest in holding the line on taxes. Such comments were:

--The Governor emphasized holding the line on state aid.

--The Governor wants to spend less money.

--Governor Exon is a Democrat but the most damned conservative Democrat in the world.

--The Governor's position is that increased state aid to education has to result in "dollar for dollar" exchange in reducing local property taxes.

--The Governor has emphasized economy--no new spending.

--The Governor has emphasized property tax relief.

--The Governor has emphasized holding the line on the budget. There were no exceptions--not even education.

--The Governor stayed with his campaign pledge of no new taxes.

It is quite apparent that the legislative and education interest group respondents do not perceive the Governor as having given top priority to education issues in his campaign for office. The Governor himself, in a personal interview, indicated that he did not use educational issues in campaigning for the Governor's office in 1970. It is equally apparent, though, that his commitment to control spending and property tax relief are indeed issues directly related to educational policy making in the state and his considerable powers of tenure potential, budget preparation, and veto potential have been and will continue to be of assistance to him in his efforts to keep his campaign promises.

The Legislature

There are two distinct features which set Nebraska's Legislature apart from other legislatures. It is the only state Legislature in the country that is Unicameral--one house. Besides being a Unicameral Legislature, Legislators are non-partisan. The push to switch from the Bicameral to a Unicameral Legislature began in the early 1900s. Largely due to the efforts of Senator George Norris (R-Nebraska), the Nebraska electorate adopted a Constitutional Amendment in 1934 which substituted the Unicameral for Nebraska's Bicameral Legislature. Included in the proposal was a provision that members of the Unicameral should be elected on a non-partisan basis.

Several factors affected the adoption of the Unicameral concept by Nebraskans. One factor was economy. The Unicameral was perceived as being more economical than the Bicameral, and in 1934 the United States was in the midst of the Great Depression. Cutting the costs of state government was an attractive idea to money-conscious Nebraskans during the Depression. There were also two other amendments on the 1934 ballot: local option on prohibition and parimutual betting. Some observers feel that these two popular amendments helped to carry the Unicameral Amendment.[9] However, the supporters of the Unicameral and the Bicameral systems argued their cases with the Nebraska voters.

Supporters of the Unicameral emphasized:

1. There is no reason for people to vote for representatives to two separate houses. "One man--one vote" has negated the original intent of having each house elected on a different basis.

2. The Unicameral form simplifies bill passage. The process is more direct, bills are more readily available for scrutiny by Legislators and the public, and the pile-up of bills at the end of the session is eliminated.

3. The Conference Committee, an inherent evil necessary for the operation of the Bicameral, is eliminated.

4. Lobbyists are less influential in the Unicameral because the legislative process is more public.

5. Special advantages of the Unicameral include: a) easier to achieve cooperation between the Executive and Legislative Branches, b) better qualified Legislators are apt to be attracted by the potential for higher salaries.

6. The Unicameral form has been advocated by the National Municipal League since 1920, when it drafted its Model State Constitution.[10]

Supporters of the Bicameral emphasized:

1. A Bicameral provides for more careful and deliberate consideration of legislation. Action of the two houses required for passage, insures against bills being quickly passed under the sway of emotion.

2. Many of the charges of shifting responsibility are exaggerated and ill-founded. A legislator who continually fails to accept responsibility would not be re-elected.

3. The Conference Committee is subject to many checks and is not the evil often claimed.

4. Objectionable lobbying is not the major problem in the Bicameral legislature that it is often assumed to be. Lobbyists can more easily promote desired legislation where control is needed in only one house.

5. Although Bicameral State Legislaturesare not perfect, it would be easier to correct their flaws, than to change the form of the Legislature.[11]

On November 6, 1934, the Nebraska voters passed the Constitutional Amendment which provided for a single legislative house. The first Unicameral session took place in 1937, and the Unicameral has been functioning in Nebraska since that time. The Nebraska Unicameral is made up of 49 senators. These 49 senators run for office for four-year terms on a non-partisan basis, as non-partisanship was seen as being essential if the Unicameral were to be a success. The Lieutenant Governor, a statewide elected official who is partisan, presides over the legislature. The Speaker presides when the Lieutenant Governor is not present. The Lieutenant Governor only votes when there is a tie.

There are three types of committees in the Unicameral: Standing, Select, and Special Committees. During a part of the Legislative session, Standing Committees meet at designated times in the afternoon (the regular session runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.) to hear testimony on legislative bills. In the 1972 session there were 13 Standing Committees:

Committee	Number of Members
Agriculture and Recreation	8
Banking, Commerce, and Insurance	8
Budget-Appropriation	9
Constitutional Revision	7
Education	8
Government and Military Affairs	8
Judiciary	8
Labor	7
Miscellaneous Subjects	8
Public Health and Welfare	7
Public Works	8
Revenue	8
Urban Affairs	8

Since there are only 49 Senators, each Senator, except the Speaker, must serve on several Committees in order to fulfill the required membership by statute for each Committee.

Select Committees deal with the Unicameral's internal administration. In 1972, there were four Select Committees: Committee on Committees, Enrollment and Review Committee, Reference Committee, and Rules Committee. The Committee on Committees and the Reference Committee are two of the more important legislative committees. At the beginning of each legislative session, the Senators elect 13 legislators to serve on the Committee on Committees. The Committee on Committees recommends membership for Standing Committees and recommends a designated chairman for each Committee. The full legislature then votes the approval or rejection of the Committee's recommendation. The Reference Committee is responsible for either referring a bill to a Standing Committee or to the General File. Therefore, the Reference Committee is important in determining the life or death of a bill.

Special Committees serve two functions in the Unicameral. First, Special Committees study areas which might need legislation in the future. Secondly, Special Committees coordinate legislative efforts with other governmental units even when the Legislature is not in regular session. There were seven Special Committees in 1972: the Executive Board of the Legislative Council, Compact on Education, Conflicts of Interest, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Nebraska Retirement Systems, State Office Building Committee, and Transportation Advisory Commission.

Another important feature of the Unicameral is the Legislative Council which includes all 49 members of the Legislature. At the beginning of the two-year session, legislators elect eight of their colleagues to the Executive Board of the Legislative Council. While the Executive Board and the Council have varied duties, their chief functions are to act as a liaison between regular sessions and to make necessary preparations for the next regular legislative session.

According to the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures, the Nebraska Unicameral legislature ranked, overall, 9th of all Legislatures in the country in legislative effectiveness or "professionalism." However, the high total ranking was largely due to the Unicameral's high rating in accountability. The Unicameral did not rate very high in any other category.

From the standpoint of process, the Unicameral operates quite differently than a Bicameral Legislature. Before a Senator can introduce a bill, it must first be approved by the Legislative Bill Drafter. It is the Draftsman's job to check the bill against a series of criteria which include: constitutionality, phraseology, harmony of style, typographical style, and uniformity of laws.[12] For example, the Draftsman must check the bill to see if it meets certain requirements. One Constitutional provision states that

"no bill shall contain more than one subject," and it is the Draftsman's job to see that the bill meets such Constitutional requirements. The Draftsman often writes the legislative bill for a Senator. The Senator may present his ideas to the Draftsman, and the Draftsman converts these ideas into a presentable bill.

Opponents of the Unicameral system state that it is too easy for a bill to become law, that the Bicameral system offers checks and balances which act as safeguards against poor and hasty legislation. Proponents of the Unicameral point to the 13 steps a bill must take in order for the bill to become law. Once the Draftsman has approved the bill, the bill follows these steps:

1. Introduction and first reading

2. Reference to Standing or Select Committee

3. Consideration by Standing or Select Committees, after at least five days' notice of public hearing on each bill

4. Report by Standing Committee or Select Committees and reference to General File or Indefinite Postponement

5. General File: reading, consideration, and general debate by the Legislature and amendment if necessary

6. Reference to Enrollment and Review Committee for review

7. Report by chairman of Enrollment and Review and reference to Select File

8. Select File: amendment, by unanimous consent; to recommit to Standing Committee; to recommit to General File; to Postpone Indefintely and to Advance for Engrossment are some of the motions in order

9. Advancement to Enrollment and Review for Engrossment unless recommitted to a Standing Committee or Indefinitely Postponed

10. Report by chairman of Enrollment and Review in reference to Final Reading File or to Select File by specific amendment

11. Final Reading (A proposed bill must be on each Senator's desk twenty-four hours prior to final reading)

12. Emergency Clause (if there is one)

13. Reconsideration if vetoed by the Governor[13]

All bills in the Nebraska Unicameral, whether they are money bills (bills needing financing like school finance legislation) or non-money bills, follow the above process. In most Bicameral systems a money bill must go through the Appropriation Committee at some point. In the Unicameral measures needing funding are followed by an "A" bill. The "A" bill is an appropriations bill which provides funds for the bill it is attached to. In school finance legislation, then, the Education Committee will pass a school finance bill which will provide for a minimum educational program. This bill is followed by an "A" bill which provides the funds needed in order to obtain the minimum program outlined in the regular bill. When the full Legislature votes, it votes first on the regular school finance bill, then on the "A" bill. If the regular bill fails, then no vote is taken on the "A" bill. It is possible (and sometimes happens) for a Senator to vote for a regular bill but refuse to vote the funds to implement the bill by voting against the "A" bill. This allows Senators to say, "I voted a better program for our schools," but in the next breath to state that "I voted against extravagant spending which would raise your taxes." From a procedural standpoint, the bill had to go through one Committee only, whereas in a Bicameral system, the bill would have to go through two Committees in each House, and possibly a Joint Conference Committee before it would become law.

In 1967, the Unicameral passed LB 488 which was a school finance bill providing for $89 million in state funds for education. But the Legislature voted for only $25 million appropriation in the "A" bill, and by 1972, only $35 million of the possible $89 million was actually appropriated. This is a prime example how the Legislature can vote for a bill, but vote against full funding the bill.

Important considerations in any legislature is the question of whom legislatures depend upon for information when they are considering educational proposals and conflict in the legislature over educational matters. Seven legislative leaders, who served during the 1971 and 1972 legislative sessions, were interviewed. Due to time limitations, not every legislative leader was asked all the questions on the interview schedule. Although the Unicameral did have some data-producing capability in the Research Division of the Legislative Council, legislators still depended on outside sources of information for educational issues. To determine the legislature's useful sources of information on educational issues, the seven interviewed legislators were asked two questions: Which individuals and groups provide you with the most useful information about public schools? Which source do you find to be the most useful? Tables 6 and 7 contain lists by frequency of mention of the individuals and groups identified by legislative leaders as providing useful information and the source found most useful.

TABLE 6

FREQUENCY MENTION OF SOURCES OF USEFUL
INFORMATION ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO LEGISLATORS

Source	Frequency of Mention N=7
State Department of Education	5
Nebraska State Education Association	5
Nebraska Council for School Administrators	5
Nebraska School Boards Association	5
Local School District Officials	4
Legislative Research Division	2

The data indicate that legislators had multiple sources of information to rely upon. The State Department of Education, educational interest groups, and local school district officials competed to supply data to legislators. Some legislators relied upon the official Fiscal Analyst of the Legislative

Council for data on budgets and revenue concerning education. More legislators identified local school officials as the "most useful" suppliers of information than any other source. This again emphasizes the "local control" mystique which pervades public education in Nebraska.

TABLE 7

FREQUENCY MENTION OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION
LEGISLATORS PERSONALLY FOUND MOST USEFUL

Source	Frequency of Mention
Local School District Officials	3
State Department of Education	2
Nebraska State Education Association	1
Nebraska School Boards Association	1
Legislative Research Division	1

Legislative leaders were also asked to specifically rate the information from the Department of Education in terms of its meeting their (the legislators') needs. Table 8 represents the responses of the legislators. While some legislators criticized the Department's data as "not comprehensive enough" or as "raw data--not in usable form," most legislators were satisfied with the Department's data. Legislators indicated that the Department was one information source among many. Also they stressed that neither the Commissioner nor Department employees supplied any information unless a legislator specifically requested the data.

TABLE 8

LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTION OF DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INFORMATION

	Number of Times Chosen
Almost always meets your needs	3
Usually meets your needs	4
Sometimes meets your needs	1
Almost never meets your needs	1

Legislative conflict on educational matters was another area covered in the interview with legislators. The legislative leaders were given a card that listed certain conflicts that could typically be found in state legislatures. The legislators were asked to rate the importance of each conflict when a major school finance bill was being considered. Table 9 contains the legislators' responses.

TABLE 9

LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN CONFLICTS TO MAJOR SCHOOL FINANCE BILLS

Type of Conflict	N = 7			
	Great Importance	Moderate Importance	Slight Importance	No Importance
Between the Political Parties		1	1	5
Between the Governor's Supporters and the Governor's Opponents	2	4	1	
Between Spokesmen for the Cities and Those for Suburbs or Rural Areas	3	4		
Between Liberals and Conservatives	1	2	3	
Between Business Spokesmen and Labor Spokesmen		3	3	1
Between Spokesmen for Wealthy School Districts and Spokesmen for Poor School Districts	1	6		
Other Conflicts (SPECIFY)				

Not surprisingly, the least important conflict in the non-partisan Unicameral was party conflict. Conflict between spokesmen for business and labor was of moderate to slight importance on school finance legislation. The important conflicts existed between the Governor's supporters and opponents, between wealthy and poor districts, and between rural and urban districts.

Legislators indicated that conflict between the Governor's supporters and opponents over school finance legislation has been recent. Previous governors "had not been that concerned with school finance" and conflict between the Governor and legislators had been minimal on this issue. However,

Governor Exon has been more active in school finance matters than his predecessors. While the 1972 Legislature was considering LB 1377--a school finance bill which would have raised the state level support for education, Governor Exon publicly stated he would veto the bill if it passed. He opposed the bill because it did not contain tax relief for property owners. His opposition split legislators somewhat, but the bill passed the Unicameral. However, Governor Exon vetoed the bill, and legislators were forced into camps of either supporting or opposing the Governor.

Conflict between urban and rural and poor and wealthy school districts were quite similar. In terms of property tax wealth, the urban districts were generally poorer and sought more state aid to education while rural districts were wealthier and sought to maintain the present level of funding. This conflict inevitably reverted to the question of local control of schools.

The State Board of Education

The Nebraska State Board of Education, which is a constitutional body elected by the people, has many functions. Primarily it is a policy-making body with the responsibility of seeing that the State Department of Education functions effectively within the framework developed by the legislature and by the Board. Stated simply, the State Board and the Department of Education are obligated by statute to perform a broad leadership function and to accept the responsibility for promoting the efficiency, welfare, and improvement in the state school system in every way possible.[14]

The Constitution of Nebraska states that the State Department of Education shall be composed of a State Board of Education and a Commissioner of Education and that the State Department of Education shall have general supervision and administration of the school system of the state and of such

other activities as the legislature may direct.[15] The constitution identifies the characteristics and functions of the State Board as follows:

1. The State Board of Education shall be composed of eight members and shall be elected from eight districts of substantially equal population as provided by the Legislature;

2. The term of office shall be for four years for each member;

3. The duties and powers of the Board shall be prescribed by the Legislature;

4. State Board of Education members shall receive no compensation but shall be reimbursed their actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties;

5. The members of the Board shall not be actively engaged in the educational profession;

6. State Board of Education members shall be elected on a non-partisan basis;

7. The State Board of Education shall appoint and fix the compensation of the Commissioner of Education; and

8. The Board shall appoint all employees of the State Department of Education on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education.

Beginning in the late 1960s, campaigns for membership on the State Board of Education in Nebraska began to become rather hotly-contested with education interest groups playing a much more active role in support of selected candidates than previously was true. The State Board of Education was a relatively low-key, low-profile organization until the late 1960s when the issues of school district reorganization and public aid to parochial schools came in for consideration. These two issues, and especially school district reorganization, were considered by many observers to be the principle reasons for the Board's ultimate dismissal of then Commissioner of Education, Floyd Miller. Miller had for some time believed there existed a need to reorganize into larger operating units many of the small school districts of the State. He also spoke out against state support of transportation of pupils to parochial schools. Miller stressed that he was

voicing his opposition to the possibility of transporting parochial students at public expense as a private citizen and not as the Commissioner of Education. Nonetheless, his position on the issue and his public disclosure of his position on this issue upset many persons, including some State Board of Education members. Likewise, Miller sought the support of the State Board of Education and the general public for the recommendations relative to school district reorganization contained within the Great Plains School District Organization Project Report for Nebraska. This was a federally-funded, multi-state effort to study school district organization in four states, including Nebraska, and to provide recommendations for improvement. Essentially, the Great Plains Report recommended a restructuring of Nebraska's school district boundaries around seven broad guidelines developed from the study and further recommended legislation to facilitate the implementation of those guidelines. When it became apparent what the recommendations of the Great Plains Study were, opposition to those recommendations, and ultimately to Miller because of his support for the study, began to organize. The opposition effort was generated mainly by The Nebraska School Improvement Association under the direction of its Executive-Secretary, S. H. "Zeke" Brauer Jr., along with several allied groups including the Catholic schools. This NSIA coalition began to systematically attack the report and Dr. Miller and to exert its efforts and resources to the election to the State Board of Education of persons sympathetic to the views of that coalition, mainly those concerned about local control over the destiny of the smaller schools of the state. Such campaign efforts by the coalition were sufficiently successful to bring about a 5-3 split in the State Board at the next general election--five members supporting the more conservative views of the NSIA coalition and three members apparently more inclined to agree with Commissioner Miller

and his more "liberal" philosophy. It should be pointed out that those who opposed Commissioner Miller and his views looked upon the Great Plains Report as the "straw that broke the camel's back"; they were apparently disposed to disagree with Commissioner Miller's philosophy and methods of operation on other matters as well. The NSIA coalition majority membership on the State Board brought about the refusal of the Board to accept the Great Plains Report and ultimately, the dismissal of Dr. Miller as Commissioner of Education. The Board then appointed the present Commissioner, Cecil Stanley, until then the Assistant Commissioner, Division of Vocational Education within the Nebraska State Department of Education.

At that point, several major education interest groups in the state, principally the Nebraska State Education Association and The Nebraska Council of School Administrators began to work to "repair" what they considered to be the damages incurred at the last general election by the NSIA coalition. The efforts made by the informal NSEA-NCSA coalition were successful in returning to the State Board of Education a 5-3 split with the majority of members generally sympathetic to the NSEA-NCSA position. At the same November, 1970 election, J. J. Exon successfully unseated the incumbent Republican Governor, Norbert Tiemann, and chose as one of his top administrative assistants, a State Board of Education member generally considered to be one of the five-member block sympathetic to the more "liberal" views of the NSEA-NCSA coalition. As a result of this resignation from the State Board to serve the Governor, the division on the Board was reduced to 4-3.

It was generally believed by respondents that the NSEA-NCSA coalition favored and supported the re-election of incumbent Governor Tiemann due to his interests in education and primarily his interest in increasing the amount of state aid available to local school districts. Likewise, it was

believed that the NSIA coalition favored and supported J.J. Exon because of his concern for holding down spending and gaining property tax relief. When Exon was elected Governor in 1970, the NSIA coalition, in effect, called in its political debt and Governor Exon appointed, to the vacant seat on the State Board, a member considered by many to be generally sympathetic to the views of the NSIA coalition. Thus, a 4-4 split between the more "liberal" and more "conservative" members of the board occurred. Because of this split, virtually no resolutions in support or opposition to educational programs and issues in the state were able to be developed and supported by the State Board of Education. At the next two general elections, the NSEA-NCSA coalition continued to work for the election of members sympathetic to its causes and beliefs and as a result of these and other efforts, it is generally believed that, at present, the Nebraska State Board of Education is composed, in large part, of members who are more sympathetic to the liberal NSEA-NCSA oalition than the more conservative NSIA coalition.

Five current or former members of the State Board of Education were interviewed during the conduct of this study and their membership on the Board ranged from two years for two members to seventeen years for one member. Two members are presently retired--one having served as a teacher, coach and County uperintendent of schools in Nebraska and the other having served as a local school district superintendent of schools for some 30 years. Of the other three members, one is in farming and two are attorneys, one also has interests in insurance and real estate. Two of the Board members interviewed have generally been considered by observers to be sympathetic to the more conservative NSIA coalition and three were considered to be generally sympathetic to the more liberal NSEA-NCSA coalition. Three of the five persons interviewed had, at one time or another, served as President of the State Board of Education.

Two of the Board members indicated they had been encouraged by others to run for the Board. Such encouragement was reported to have come from the Parent-Teachers Association, The Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and local teachers' association for one member and from the local school district superintendent and president of a local board of education for the other member. It seems apparent that these two persons were encouraged to run for the Board in an effort to defeat NSIA-sponsored candidates as one of these two candidates reported that the NSIA had actively opposed his candidacy. Support for their election was reported to be in the forms of public endorsement and money for campaigning.

One member, although reporting it was his own idea to seek Board membership, did report that he had received public endorsement and/or financial support from some local PTA's, the Farmer's Union, NSIA, and other informal groups and that "the educational groups did not support me."

The other two members of the Board who were interviewed reported that the decision to run for the office was their own idea, that there were no groups who were especially active in their support during the campaign, nor were there any groups actively opposed to their candidacy.

Two members reported that they had campaigned on particular issues in education and three suggested they had not. One of the three who reported he had not campaigned on any particular issue, did report that he decided to run for the office "to promote vocational and agricultural programs." Campaign issues identified were reorganization of school districts and increased state aid to public elementary and secondary education. All five respondents reported that the political parties of the state had played no role in their campaigns.

The Board members perceive re-election to the SBE, at least in recent years, to be extremely difficult as four indicated that incumbents are

defeated more often than they win and one reported that incumbents are defeated almost as often as they win. Comments from the respondents relative to the fairly high turnover of membership since the late 1960s were:

--You can't help but make some enemies if you're an elected official--perhaps pressure from groups to equalize state aid caused the turnover in the State Board of Education.

--There are organized groups always interested in seeing some people defeated.

--Much of the turnover has been due to the NSIA gaining power in the late 1960s, then losing power in the early 1970s.

--Usually, once on the SBE "you stay on." However, in the last election (1970) two incumbents were defeated and one did not run. In the cities, the SBE election is not big. However, in rural areas, the SBE election gets much more attention. SBE members ran different campaigns in the out-state area.

--Election to the SBE has become important and controversial.

Three members of the Board reported they devote two or three days per month, both formally and informally, to the work of being a member. One Board member suggested he devotes four to six days per month and another member reported that he devotes one week or more per month to Board business. Members generally perceive that between one-quarter and one-half of each Board meeting is used for the approval of routine items of business such as minimum standards, contracts, and land transfers. Only one member suggested that as much as three-quarters of each meeting was spent in transacting such "routine" business. As one member stated, "After policy is set by the SBE, we just go along with the Commissioner's recommendation." All respondents agreed that the Commissioner prepares the agenda for the SBE meetings but members apparently feel quite free to suggest to the Commissioner any items for discussion and/or decision making they feel should appear on the agenda. Board members receive the agenda and related information from the Commissioner and his staff about one week prior to the meeting. One member suggested that the related information received was generally

something less than complete in that his stack of reference papers grows during a meeting and he did not feel that the Board is well prepared for the items on the agenda. He closed his comments relative to this issue by saying, "I just ask the State Department of Education man if he thinks this certain proposal is right, then I vote for it--I don't like to be unprepared for items I have to vote on." The Commissioner and the State Department of Education were mentioned most frequently as being the main sources of information concerning items that appear on the agenda. Superintendents in local school districts and Senators were identified as additional sources of information by one member and one member reported "Unfortunately, I rely on newspapers."

There was some disagreement among the five respondents as to whether or not there were members of the Board who felt that they should be the spokesmen on the Board for particular geographic sections or racial-ethnic groups of the state. Three members said there were just a few members on the Board who felt this way and two indicated that most members believed that they did, indeed, represent a geographic or racial-ethnic section or group. Areas of representation identified in this respect included the big cities, sparsely-settled rural areas, the young generation of farmers, and until more recently at least, the "conservative versus the liberal split." One member reported an unwritten rule of the Board in that "if the issue being considered by the Board affects a certain area of the State, the Board member representing that area makes the motion on the issue."

Responses from the Board members relative to describing the degree of agreement on the Board when it must decide a major policy issue reflects, in part, the changes in Board membership during the late 1960s and early 1970s, discussed previously. During the time when the majority membership on the Board was the more conservative element, the Board was generally

considered as being divided into rival factions, but there was a clear working majority. During the time the Board was split philosophically, the rival factions were considered to be of equal strength, and in recent years the lines of division are perceived as depending more on the issue that is confronting the Board and much less on "liberal versus conservative" composition.

When asked the question "Does the SBE take positions or make recommendations with regard to legislation affecting the schools?" three members answered in the affirmative and two in the negative. Analyses of comments from respondents strongly suggest that during the period when the Board was split evenly, it was difficult, if not impossible, for the Board to develop resolutions and make recommendations about legislation as a group. Most of the contact with legislators during this period of time was on an individual basis and as one member reported, "I've testified one way (on proposed legislation) and had another SBE member testify another way." One member said that with the split dissolved, the "new SBE will work better in this respect."

Four members stated that the SBE does not work directly with the Governor and his staff when they (the Governor's office) are developing legislation affecting the public schools and the one member who answered this question in the affirmative stipulated that members generally work individually and at the request of the Governor. The four respondents agreed that neither the Governor nor the various legislators had become involved in school issues in which the State Board had the authority to make the decision.

Table 10 indicates the frequency with which, according to Board member respondents, various individuals and groups have sought to communicate their views directly to the State Board, or its members, during the past several years.

Table 10 indicates that contacts by local school district superintendents and spokesmen for the State Teachers' Association (NSEA), the Nebraska Council

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY MENTION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS WHO SEEK TO COMMUNICATE THEIR VIEWS DIRECTLY TO THE STATE BOARD

Person or Group	N = 5 Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Individual Parents or Parent Groups	1	0	4	0
Local (or County) School District Superintendents	2	3	0	0
City Government Officials	0	1	1	3
State Teachers Association (NEA)	3	2	0	0
State Teachers Union (AFT)	0	1	1	2*
State Administrator Associations	3	1	1	0
State School Boards Association	2	2	0	1
Spokesmen for "Special Education"	4	1	0	0
Spokesmen for "Vocational Education"	4	1	0	0
Labor Groups	0	2	2	1
Business Groups	0	0	4	1
Farm Groups	0	1	2	2
Religious Groups	1	2	1	1
Racial-Ethnic Groups	0	1	3	1
OTHERS				
Reorganization Opponents	1			
Sex Education Advocates & Opponents	1			
League of Women Voters		1		
Parent-Teachers Association		1		

*One member did not respond.

of School Administrators (NCSA), the State School Board's Association (NSBA), and special education and vocational education groups comprise a large percentage of the total number of contacts made by individuals or groups interested in communicating their views directly to the State Board or its members.

Policy issues identified by Board members which caused the various groups to seek to influence the State Board and their frequency of mention are presented in Table 11.

Testifying at hearings, telephone calls, letters, personal contact, and presentations at State Board of Education meetings were the ways in which individuals or groups have sought to influence the SBE as identified by SBE members.

TABLE 11

POLICY ISSUES AND FREQUENCY OF MENTION AROUND WHICH VARIOUS GROUPS HAVE SOUGHT TO INFLUENCE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Issue	Frequency of Mention
School Finance	3
Accreditation	2
Reorganization of School Districts	1
"Local Control"	1
The Firing of Commissioner Miller	1
Sex Education	1

Table 12 identifies those groups which the Board member respondents considered to be most influential in their contacts with the State Board of Education.

TABLE 12

GROUPS WITH FREQUENCY OF MENTION WHO ARE CONSIDERED TO BE MOST INFLUENTIAL WITH THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Issue	Frequency of Mention
Nebraska School Board's Association	2
Nebraska State Education Association	2
Nebraska Council of School Administrators	2
Nebraska School Improvement Association	1
Parent Groups	1

The one respondent who, as shown in Table 12, identified parent groups as the most influential, said, "They are the people who pay the taxes. They represent what the school system is all about. I mistrust the professionals because they only want something for themselves." Four of the five members interviewed indicated that the State Board of Education does not actively seek to enlist the support of the educational organizations for its decisions. One member suggested that the SBE does invite the educational interest groups to meetings and apparently that was the basis for his affirmative response to this question.

Table 13 presents the views of the Board members pursuant to their perceptions of the importance of individuals or groups in terms of helping the Board members see state education policy issues as they do.

TABLE 13

PERCEPTIONS OF SBE MEMBER RESPONDENTS RELATIVE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS IN TERMS OF HELPING BOARD MEMBERS UNDERSTAND STATE EDUCATION POLICY ISSUES

	N = 5		
Groups or Individuals	Very Important	Important	Unimportant
Views of Other Board Members	2	3	0
Views of the Commissioner	4	1	0
Views of School People Who Speak for Local School Districts	1	4	0
Views of Political Party Leaders	0	1	4
Views of State Legislators	1	3	1
Views of the Governor	3	2	0
Views of the State Teachers' Assn.	1	3	1
Views of the State School Administrators' Assn.	2	2	1
Views of Other Groups (Business, Labor, Farm, Etc.)			
Labor		1	
Racial-Ethnic Groups		1	

Board member respondents and the Commissioner of Education were also asked to state their views about the job of the Commissioner of Education. Table 13 presents a comparison of those judgments on a strongly-agree to strongly-disagree continuum.

On only three of the ten position statements presented in Table 14 was there significant disagreement among the Board members about the Commissioner's job. Two members tended to agree that the Commissioner should maintain a neutral stand on education policy issues that are very controversial among the citizens of the state and three members strongly disagreed with this position. Two members tended to agree that the Commissioner should work to have people he respects become members of the State Board of Education and three members tended to disagree with this position. One member

TABLE 14

BOARD MEMBER AND COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION JUDGMENTS RELATIVE TO POSITION STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO THE JOB OF COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

	C=Commissioner's Judgment N=5			
	Strongly Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The Commissioner should assume leadership in shaping the policies enacted by the State Board of Education	5 (C)	0	0	0
2. The Commissioner should maintain a neutral stand on education policy issues that are very controversial among citizens of the state	0	2	0 (C)	3
3. The Commissioner should actively seek to influence legislative leaders with regard to education policies	3 (C)	1	1	0
4. The Commissioner should work to have people he respects become members of the SBE	0 (C)	2	3	0
5. The Commissioner should administer the SDE and leave policy matters to other state officials	1	0 (C)	0	4
6. The Commissioner should actively work with party leaders in order to attain education policy goals	1	3	1	0 (C)
7. The Commissioner should take a policy position in which he believes even when most professional educators may be hostile	3	2 (C)	0	0
8. The Commissioner should be the principle advocate of major changes in state education policy	2 (C)	3	0	0
9. The Commissioner should actively seek to influence federal legislation that affects public education in his state	4 (C)	0	1	0
10. The Commissioner should allow local district officials as much leeway as possible in dealing with educational issues	3 (C)	2	0	0

strongly agreed that the Commissioner should administer the State Department of Education and leave policy matters to other state officials while four members strongly disagreed with this statement. With the other seven position statements on the list, there was general convergence among Board members toward the strongly-agree--tend to agree end of the continuum.

Thus, the judgments of the Commissioner and the State Board of Education members differed significantly in the areas of:

1. The Commissioner working to have people he respects become members of the State Board of Education;

2. The Commissioner administering the State Department of Education and leaving policy matters to other state officials; and

3. The Commissioner working actively with party leaders in order to attain educational policy goals.

On the other seven characteristics of the Commissioner's job, the Commissioner and a majority of the SBE members were in general agreement.

The one legislative leader and the six legislative committee members were asked to assess the importance of the State Board of Education in actually formulating and working for education legislation. Five of the seven legislators suggested that the State Board of Education was not important at all as a participant, and two suggested that the State Board of Education was a participant of only minor importance. Obviously, the legislative respondents do not consider the SBE to be very important in formulating and working for educational legislation. Comments from legislative leaders relative to this point include:

--The Board members are non-paid people.

--They don't want to make decisions that have political implications.

--They don't make themselves known.

--They try to get their wants known through the newspapers.

--The State Department of Education has not been able to provide

> leadership. Therefore, the State Board of Education is not looked upon as being knowledgeable because they appoint the Commissioner.

All five of the respondents from educational interest groups agreed that the State Board of Education does not take the lead in promoting education legislation.

The Commissioner of Education and the State Department of Education

Acting as the executive officer of the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education heads the State Department of Education. With the assistance of a Deputy Commissioner and three Assistant Commissioners, he is the Chief State School Officer who directs the promotion and improvement of education in the elementary and secondary schools of Nebraska.[16]

Directly related to the office of the Commissioner are the following functions:[17]

> (1) To delegate administrative and supervisory functions to the members of the staff of the Department of Education;
>
> (2) To establish and maintain an appropriate system of personnel administration for the Department;
>
> (3) To prescribe such administrative rules and regulations as are necessary for the proper execution of duties and responsibilities placed upon him as Commissioner;
>
> (4) To perform all duties prescribed by the Legislature in accordance with the policies adopted by the Board;
>
> (5) To purchase and control all supplies and equipment, including vehicles, used by the Department;
>
> (6) To prepare and administer the Department's budget(s), to maintain a functional system of accounting and budget control, to provide liaison with other state agencies and organizational units regarding fiscal and budget matters and to prepare and present various financial reports to the State Board of Education, the Legislature, and State and Federal agencies as required;
>
> (7) To provide local school district boards of education, administrators and lay person assistance in the appropriate application of school laws, ruling in some cases of disputed law and arranging for compliance with school laws;

(8) To provide schools and the public with information relating to schools, by outlining and carrying out plans and conducting essential activities for the preparation of curriculum and other materials, by providing necessary supervisory and consultative services, by holding conferences of professional educators and other civic leaders, and by conducting research, experimentation and evaluation of school programs and activities;

(9) To prepare agendas for the meetings of the State Board of Education and keeping the Board currently informed and advised on the operation and status of all aspects of the educational program of the State, and providing basic facts to enable the Board to act quickly and efficiently upon issues which call for decisions;

(10) To prepare an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature covering the actions of the Board, the operations of the State Department of Education, and the progress and needs of the schools, and recommending such legislation as may be necessary to satisfy these needs;

(11) To prescribe a uniform system of records and accounting to enable the schools of the State to keep adequate educational and financial records and to gather and report necessary educational data to evaluate educational progress; and

(12) To serve, by virtue of his office, as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees for State Colleges, the State Board of Appraisers for Educational Lands and Funds, the Nebraska Educational Television Commission and the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts.

A description of the circumstances surrounding the appointment of the present Commissioner of Education, Cecil Stanley, has been presented in an earlier section of this Report. According to Commissioner Stanley, the five conservative members of the State Board of Education approached him some twenty-four hours prior to the dismissal of former Commissioner, Floyd Miller in 1969 and requested that he accept the appointment as Commissioner. According to the Commissioner's testimony, he at that point, contacted the three liberal members of the Board, asked for and received their support and subsequently, accepted the appointment. Three years later, three new members were elected to the State Board of Education and a move was made within the Board to replace Stanley as Commissioner. This effort failed by a vote of 3-5 and Stanley was reappointed Commissioner. Apparently, there have

been no efforts made within the Board since 1972 to replace Stanley although some observers are of the opinion that Commissioner Stanley plans to retire from that office sometime in 1974 or 1975.

Observers generally agree that the Commissioner's tenure of office has been a very difficult one with the changing composition of the State Board of Education during the late 1960s and early 1970s. These observers further suggest that the situational restraints placed upon the Commissioner during these times were extremely severe and that the Commissioner did very well to even "survive." Despite these difficulties the SDE apparently expanded its assistance offerings to local school districts. Even so, one observer reported, "The Commissioner knew he could not please both factions (liberal and conservative) so he tried to just keep things together." This same observer went on to predict that "with the new State Board, the Commissioner and the State Board will now (1973) play more of a leadership role in policy making."

All five State Board of Education members interviewed during the course of this study were on the Board at the time Commissioner Stanley was appointed to office. Although the Commissioner reported that, before accepting the appointment, he sought out and received the support of the Nebraska State Education Association and the Nebraska Council of School Administrators as well as the three liberal members of the Board, four of the five Board of Education members reported that Commissioner Stanley did not have the unanimous support of the educational organizations of the state. The Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, and the Nebraska School Boards Association were identified by some Board member respondents as having been opposed to the appointment of Stanley. The NSEA was identified as objecting to the appointment by two Board members, the NCSA by three and the NSBA by one member. Two Board members said the

groups opposed the appointment because Stanley had not been a superintendent of schools, two mentioned that it was because he did not hold a Ph.D. degree, and one Board member suggested that the educational organizations did not identify Stanley as a "leader."

Two Board members suggested that the Board did indicate to Commissioner Stanley some major changes that he was expected to undertake in the State Department of Education or in its relationships. These changes included refining State Board of Education policies, setting directions for the state, improving relationships with local school districts, and returning schools to the people. The two Board members who suggested that the State Board of Education had not indicated any expected major changes to the Commissioner indicated that the broad expectation of the new Commissioner was to "hold the line." The fifth Board member was silent on this point. Such expectations by the State Board of Education appear to reflect rather explicitly the conservative majority of the Board membership at the time of Stanley's appointment.

Perceptions of the Commissioner, a State Board of Education observer, and the five Board of Education members relative to the approaches taken by the Commissioner in preparing a major educational policy proposal are shown in Table 15 below.

Analyses of the data in Table 15 suggest that the Commissioner:

(1) Does meet informally with selected members of the Board to discuss his ideas, but not necessarily with all members;

(2) Does develop fully detailed proposals for the entire Board to consider;

(3) Does take ideas or suggestions from Board members and develops these into policy proposals;

(4) Rarely, if ever, presents an outline of his ideas to a Board committee for its reactions;

(5) Rarely, if ever, presents a detailed proposal for a Board committee to consider; and

(6) Does develop a detailed proposal and informally solicit, on rare occasions, the reactions of some individual Board members before presenting it to the Board.

TABLE 15

APPROACHES TAKEN BY THE COMMISSIONER IN PREPARING MAJOR EDUCATIONAL POLICY PROPOSALS

	Frequency				
Approach	Often	Some-times	Rarely	Never	No Ans.
a. Meet informally with individual board members to discuss your ideas	BO BM-1	C BM-2	BM-2		
b. Present an outline of your ideas to a Board committee for its reactions			BO BM-1	C BM-4	
c. Present an outline of your ideas to the entire Board for its reactions	C BM-2	BO BM-2			BM-1
d. Develop a fully detailed proposal for a Board committee to consider	BM-1		BO	C BM-3	BM-1
e. Develop a fully detailed proposal for the entire Board to consider	BO C BM-3			BM-1	BM-1
f. Develop a detailed proposal and informally solicit the reactions of the individual Board members before presenting it to the Board or one of its committees	BO		BM-2 C	BM-3	
g. Take ideas or suggestions from Board members and develop these into a policy proposal	BO C BM-3	BM-2			

BO=Board Observer (1) BM=Board Member (5) C=Commissioner (1) N=7

Both the Commissioner and the Governor report that they do personally communicate on education matters and there does exist an interchange of discussion between the top assistants in each of the two offices. Both the Commissioner and the Governor admit they are in disagreement from time to time but as the Commissioner stated, "We stay good friends." Areas of

disagreement identified by the Commissioner were state aid to public education and Department of Education budget requests. The Governor identified state aid to education as an area of such disagreement. The Commissioner identifies the Governor's office as being able to help the State Department of Education with "personal things when we want to get something done and for support for State Department activities such as conferences." The Governor suggested that communications between the two offices are initiated mostly by the Commissioner's office. Both the Governor and the Commissioner agreed that the Commissioner's office is among the Governor's most important sources of information on policy matters affecting the public schools. The Commissioner went on to suggest that "others have his (the Governor's) ear but on the other hand, he doesn't bypass the State Department of Education." The Commissioner further recognized that, on occasion, he was able to influence the Governor through those State Board of Education members who are close to the Governor. The Governor identified the Commissioner as being able to greatly diminish the likelihood of passage of an education bill in the legislature if he is opposed to it and identified the Commissioner as being "somewhat influential as far as the Legislature is concerned but not overpowering."

One of the Governor's top staff assistants and advisor in the area of school finance suggested that the Commissioner, as a source of advice and ideas about school finance, was not at all important and "is not knowledgeable, open, aggressive, or positive in approach" and that previous Commissioners have had much more input than Commissioner Stanley. This same source indicated that the information coming to the Governor's office from the State Department of Education usually met the needs of the office and that the major supplier of that information, Dr. Wilbur Schindler, "has been on the job for twenty years and he does a good job of providing valid statistics."

A second top-level assistant to the Governor suggested that the Governor's office does communicate with the Commissioner "but not as much as we should." Unlike the Governor, this assistant suggested that if the Commissioner were opposed to a bill, its chances of passing in the legislature would not be greatly diminished because the Commissioner does not have that many votes in the legislature and very few people in Nebraska are elected to the legislature for their stand on education.

Information from legislative committee members indicates that the Commissioner and his staff rarely initiate communication with the three major committees that are directly related to the State Department functions--the Education Committee, the Budget-Appropriations Committee, and the Revenue Committee. Members of the Budget-Appropriations Committee suggested that the Commissioner and his staff are invited to present their request for the SDE budget and generally provide the committee with information upon request and present testimony at budget hearings. Most of the communication between the Commissioner and his staff and the Revenue Committee flows through a staff member of that Committee.

Five of the six Legislative Committee members indicated that in their committee activity, they have personally contacted the Commissioner or his staff with regard to legislation affecting the public schools--primarily reorganization of school districts and state aid to education within the Education Committee and the State Department of Education budget considerations within the Budget-Appropriations Committee.

Table 16 presents the opinions of the legislative committee members relative to the degree of success achieved by the Commissioner and his staff in getting their proposals enacted by the legislature.

TABLE 16

DEGREE OF SUCCESS EXPERIENCED BY THE COMMISSIONER AND HIS STAFF IN GETTING PROPOSALS ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS (N=6)

Degree	Frequency of Response
1. Almost always successful	2
2. Successful most of the time	1
3. Successful about half of the time	0
4. Successful less than half the time	2
5. Almost always successful	1

It should be noted that one of the Legislative Committee members who gave a rating of 1 or almost always successful, further explained, "If you mean leadership as providing policy changes, then the old (conservative) State Board of Education and State Department of Education are stagnant." One who gave a rating of 4 or successful less than half the time added the comment "for what little they propose." Other comments relative to the success gained by the Commissioner and his staff in the State Department of Education relative to getting their proposals enacted by the Legislature include:

--Legislators do not see the Commissioner as a leader. Legislators may listen to him but I do not see the Commissioner as being strong in terms of his status as an educational leader, his ability to supply useful information, his position in a political party, his standing with the Governor, his lobbying effort or his know-how.

--I can't remember the State Department of Education ever bringing their proposal to the Legislature. They come in and make general statements about state aid.

--I never thought of him as political. I can't tell you what party he belongs to.

--We haven't paid much attention to the Commissioner.

--The State Department of Education never gets near what they ask for. The SDE does not have good public relations with the Legislature. This is not a big revelation.

--The Commissioner is tops--can't find a better man anywhere.

--The kind of legislation that comes directly out of the State Department of Education is corrective and routine. On these types of matters, they're successful, I suppose. In regard to policy changes, no such things comes out of the SDE. In all fairness, another factor has been the restrictions placed on the SDE by the conservative State Board of Education. That might change with the new State Board.

--They don't offer much legislation.

The Legislative leader interviewed suggested that "They do not offer much legislation. I imagine that if the Commissioner opposed an educational bill it would have an effect but this has never happened. I cannot recall the Commissioner ever taking a stand on an educational bill."

Legislative committee members were asked to rate the information coming to those committees from the State Department of Education. Three members said that the information almost always meets their needs, one suggested the information sometimes meets their needs and one mentioned that the information almost never meets their needs. One respondent who suggested that the information almost always meets their needs further suggested "The State Department of Education is the only one with the basic information. However, their ability to put it in usable form is restricted." Another committee member explained that "the information from the SDE is just not comprehensive enough. Perhaps it's the way we pose the questions, but State Department of Education responses are not comprehensive." One suggested that "the State Department staff is a great group. I can ask for any information and the SDE would get it for me. I used SDE information as bases for many of my legislative proposals on education." Another member said "The Legislative Fiscal Analysis Office gets our information. We have a full-time staff man on our Committee for the first time."

One legislative leader indicated that the information from the SDE usually met his needs and believed that the legislative information requests were always specific and thus allowed the SDE to provide adequate information.

Of the representatives of the five education interest groups interviewed, two suggested that the Commissioner and his staff have been successful most of the time in proposing legislation but one added "For what little they offer" and the second added "For what they propose--which is not much." One EIG respondent did not believe it was appropriate for the Commissioner to offer proposals to the legislature.

Comments from the education interest groups relative to this question were:

--The Commissioner does not offer many proposals. Basically the Commissioner and the State Department of Education do "housekeeping chores" as the Commissioner wants to avoid hassles.

--Most of their legislation is corrective in nature on minor matters such as licensing policies.

--The Commissioner sits on the fence. He does not take leadership in policy development.

--The Commissioner is not an educational leader. We work with Commissioner Stanley but he is not a leader.

--Some people think that the Commissioner should be a knight on a charger with a lot of educational reforms. The NSIA does not share this view of the Commissioner. Commissioner Stanley does not attempt to give leadership and direction to the State Board. He makes recommendations and suggestions but he does not try to extend his role.

Representatives of three education interest groups view the Commissioner as a minor source of information to the Governor on public school matters and two consider him to be not an important source at all. One respondent stated that "school people do not have any confidence in Stanley and the Governor knows this." Another said, "The Governor is political and does not care what the Commissioner thinks. Also, the State Board's compositions has been such that the Commissioner could not assume any leadership without losing his job." Another suggested that "The Governor has two good aides who develop the Governor's educational policy stands. Commissioner Stanley has no leadership in this area--he offers nothing."

State aid to public education, vocational programs, certification standards, rules and regulations for legal operation of schools, research and accreditation standards were areas of involvement or issues identified by the education interest groups with which they worked most closely with the Commissioner and the State Department of Education. The Nebraska Council of School Administrators suggested they were always contacted by the Commissioner and his staff when they were formulating policies concerning the issues. Their representatives attended meetings held around the state and sponsored by the SDE to seek local input. Two other representatives of education interest groups suggested they were rarely contacted by the Commissioner and his staff, one group (NSIA) suggested they did not try to get into an advisory relationship with the State Department and one respondent failed to answer the question. Four of the five respondents believed that, regardless of the number of opportunities to advise the Commissioner and his staff, that advice made very little difference in terms of what the Commissioner and his staff finally decided to do.

Education Interest Groups

The major education interest groups involved with educational policy making at the state level in Nebraska have been identified previously as the Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska School Board's Association and the Nebraska School Improvement Association.

The Nebraska State Education Association is an affiliate of the National Education Association and is the major professional organization for the teachers of the state. NSEA reported a membership of some 18,800 persons with a potential membership of over 20,000. Executive-Secretary John Lynch reported that there were approximately 17,200 public school teachers in

Nebraska and the present membership of 18,800 in NSEA includes parochial school and higher education members. Lynch identified the major foci of the NSEA today to be more in the direction of "teacher welfare, salaries and protecting teacher's rights and contracts, and away from curriculum and instruction considerations." The Association has been active in recent years in such educational issue areas as school district reorganization, state aid to education, accreditation, standards, and teacher certification standards.

The NSEA employs a full-time lobbyist (Lynch) and one part-time lobbyist was identified as David Tews, whom Lynch described as "a professional lobbyist and the best vote counter in the business." Tews is on retainer with NSEA and has a responsibility of putting in formal language legislative proposals for the NSEA and works to get them introduced into the legislature.

The NSEA has become more politically active in recent years with the development of a political action arm known as PACE and this arm has provided public endorsement, financial support, and volunteer services in support of candidates endorsed by the NSEA.

The Nebraska Council of School Administrators is an umbrella organization comprised of the Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals, the Nebraska Association of School Administrators, the Nebraska Association of School Business Officials, the Nebraska Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the Nebraska State Association of Secondary School Principals. The Executive-Secretary of NCSA is Dr. Loren Brakenhoff who was employed on a full-time basis. The Council has a reported membership of 830 members with an identified potential membership of approximately 1,000 persons. At the time of the field visit, this organization was approximately three years old. The areas of curriculum, teacher certification, and accreditation standards were identified by the NCSA as the kinds of matters on

which the NCSA works most closely with the State Department of Education. Rules and Regulations for accrediting schools and state aid to education were listed as issue areas on which the Commissioner and his staff have developed policies of most importance to NCSA.

The Nebraska School Boards Association is comprised of local boards of education and has within its membership 270 local school district boards of education. It was likewise reported by the Executive-Secretary of the Association, Ross Rasmussen, that the 270 local boards holding membership represent approximately 85 per cent of the elementary and secondary school children of the State. Rasmussen is employed full-time by the Association, and he and his assistant are listed as lobbyists for that Association. Rasmussen served eight years in the Nebraska Legislature and during that time served as chairman of the Education Committee. Rasmussen was also an unsuccessful candidate for the office of Lieutenant Governor.

The NSBA does not have a political action arm nor does it make endorsements of legislative or SBE candidates. Rasmussen did indicate that although the Association has not been involved with past SBE elections, he did take time off from the Association and became involved as an individual in an effort to help defeat NSIA-sponsored candidates to the State Board of Education.

The Nebraska School Improvement Association reported a total membership of 600 school districts and the composition of the membership was reported to be primarily school board members with some parents from districts generally having a population of less than 2,500 people. As explained by Brauer, "NSIA does not represent big school districts." Brauer is employed on a full-time basis and is reported as the lobbyist for the Association. As mentioned earlier, the NSIA played a significant role through public endorsement, volunteer services, and financial contributions in getting

persons elected to the State Board of Education in the late 1960s who were sympathetic to the small schools of the state and shared the NSIA "local control" philosophy. The success enjoyed by the NSIA in this respect led to the dismissal of Former Commissioner Miller. As Brauer explained it, "The previous Commissioner felt that the SBE should be a rubber stamp for programs based on his educational philosophy. He created problems for the SBE, the legislature, and parents. There was no way we (NSIA) could get at this man except through the State Board of Education."

The NSIA identified rules and regulations for certification of teachers and rules and regulations for legal operation of schools as policies developed by the Commissioner and his staff which were of most importance to the Organization. Brauer reported that the NSIA was active "in seeking the Governor's veto of LB1377 (to increase state aid) and was also active in urging Senators not to override the veto." According to Brauer, the NSIA "no longer endeavors to raise money for candidates to the State Board or the legislature." Because of a threatened loss of tax exempt status, the NSIA now depends on individuals "outside the organization" to work on campaigns. Brauer predicted that the NSIA would "probably borrow a page from the NSEA and eventually set up a political action arm."

Table 17 presents those educational interest groups identified by the one legislative leader and six legislative committee members as being most influential when education and school finance matters are being dealt with by the legislature.

Comments from legislators relative to the educational interest groups included:

> --The Nebraska School Boards Association has a good staff, and the Executive Secretary is an ex-Senator who knows the legislature and knows what we need.

TABLE 17

EDUCATIONAL INTEREST GROUPS IDENTIFIED BY LEGISLATORS AS INFLUENTIAL IN SHAPING EDUCATIONAL AND SCHOOL FINANCE LEGISLATION

Educational Interest Group	Frequency of Mention
Nebraska School Boards Association	6
Nebraska State Education Association	4
Nebraska Council of School Administrators	2
Nebraska School Improvement Association	1
Omaha Public Schools	1
Lincoln Public Schools	1
University of Nebraska	1

--Ann Campbell of the Lincoln Public Schools is very knowledgeable.

--The Nebraska School Board's Association is made up of pretty good businessmen who will level with you.

--The Nebraska Council of School Administrators puts a lot of pressure here in the legislature to get commitments from Senators and once they leave, we amend the proposals to change the intent.

--Education groups are in good with some Senators and bad with some others. As a whole, they are reasonably respected.

--The Nebraska School Improvement Association out-maneuvers the rest of the groups. NSIA represents small school districts and generally is opposed to increased state aid because NSIA fears loss of local control and higher taxes. NSIA is also opposed to redistricting. NSIA has been able to align with non-educational interest groups which are conservative and want to avoid new taxes.

--NSEA, NSBA, NCSA have never been able to get together on a major finance bill or any education bill.

--Educators are politically naive.

--They (educational interest groups) don't work at home on elections or gathering support for matters we consider in the legislature.

--Their professional lobbyists are not so professional in their ability.

Non-educational interest groups identified by the legislators as being influential with regard to legislation in the state are identified, with their frequency of mention in Table 18.

TABLE 18

NON-EDUCATIONAL INTEREST GROUPS CONSIDERED TO BE INFLUENTIAL BY LEGISLATIVE RESPONDENTS

Non-Educational Interest Groups	Frequency of Mention
Public Power-Utility Groups	3
Farmers Groups	2
Insurance Groups	2
Catholic Organizations	1
Labor	1
League of Women Voters	1
Environmentalists	1
Liquor Groups	1
Car Dealers	1
County Officials	1
Bankers	
Lincoln and Omaha City Councils	1
Trucking Groups	1
Soil and Water Groups	1
Groups Supporting Handicapped and Retarded	1
County Officials	1

When asked to compare the influence of educational interest groups with the influence of non-educational interest groups, the legislative-respondents commented as shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19

A COMPARISON OF EDUCATIONAL INTEREST GROUPS WITH NON-EDUCATIONAL INTEREST GROUPS AS PERCEIVED BY STATE LEGISLATIVE RESPONDENTS

Degree	Frequency of Mention
1. Educational Interest Groups are the Top Groups	1
2. Educational Interest Groups are Among the Top Groups	4
3. Educational Interest Groups are Among the Less Important Groups	2
4. Educational Interest Groups are Not at All Important	0

Five legislators were asked to judge the extent to which the educational interest groups act in unison and speak with one voice. Their response and frequency of response are presented in Table 20.

TABLE 20

LEGISLATIVE RESPONDENT PERCEPTIONS AS TO THE EXTENT WHICH EDUCATIONAL INTEREST GROUPS ACT IN UNISON AND SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE

Degree	Frequency of Response
1. On Nearly All Legislative Issues	1
2. On Most Legislative Issues	1
3. On Some Legislative Issues	3
4. On Almost No Legislative Issues	0

The one legislative respondent who suggested in Table 20 that the educational interest groups act in unison in nearly all legislative issues further explained that "The Groups do break up on collective bargaining and tenure but on finance and other issues these groups are together." Other comments from legislators relative to educational interest group unity include:

--Senators publicly praise the education they had, their children got and their grandchildren are getting. Senators praise the public schools but when these same Senators are in chambers they say "Goddamn these professional educators (NSEA, NSBA, NCSA), they want too much."

--The NSBA takes a management view and the NSEA takes a labor view.

--They're always together on state aid.

--Educational interest groups are closer than they were but still not unified.

--There are too many lobbyists with different points of view. One had to hire a lobbyist to work for the lobbyist.

--NSEA, NSBA, NCSA try to work together but their interests divide them. The leadership works together but the membership doesn't understand the compromises that have to be made.

The Governor identified the NSEA as the educational interest group with which his office has most frequently disagreed. The Governor further suggested that the "NSEA had not been helpful and had accused me of being anti-education." The NSBA was considered to be somewhat helpful to the Governor although "the membership of NSBA worked hard to override the veto of LB1377

(state aid). The NSIA was considered by the Governor to be helpful to him. Exon perceived the NSEA and NSBA as having provided the most assistance in their efforts to increase state aid to education and the NSIA in their desire for property tax relief.

Commissioner Stanley also identified the Nebraska State Education Association, the Nebraska Council of School Administrators, the Nebraska School Boards Association, and the Nebraska School Improvement Association as the major educational interest groups in the state. He further stated that his office has disagreed most frequently with the NSIA over the issue areas of school finance and school district reorganization. The Commissioner suggested that he and his staff enjoy excellent rapport with the other three interest groups. Stanley serves as ex officio member of the executive committee of the NCSA and holds membership on the Legislative Committee of the NSEA. Also, a State Department of Education staffman is chairman of NCSA's legislative committee and all legislative positions of NCSA are reviewed by the SDE staffman and the Commissioner. In speaking of the NSBA, the Commissioner remarked, "We work together beautifully."

SECTION III: SELECTED STATE EDUCATIONAL POLICY ISSUE AREAS

Four state educational policy issue areas were selected to illustrate processes of state educational policy-making in Nebraska. These policy issue areas included school finance, teacher certification, educational planning and evaluation, and desegregation of schools. Although it was considered beyond the scope of this study to present an exhaustive examination of each of these issue areas, it was determined that a cross-sectional view of the issue areas would be helpful in illustrating the state educational policy processes.

School Finance

School finance is a factor in many of the basic issues of our time. Tax equity, control of schools, quality education, and the proper governmental sharing of costs are all rooted in the system for financing schools.[18] This section will present basic data relative to the financing of public elementary and secondary education in Nebraska and will discuss selected policy decisions developed at the state level in the area of school finance.

Prior to 1967, Nebraska did not have a program of state aid to public education. In 1967, the Nebraska Unicameral enacted LB448 as the School Foundation and Equalization Act, (79-1330 to 79-1344). The intent and design of the law was to "transfer part of the burden of the property tax to a sales and income tax and to move toward greater equality of financial ability to support education among the many school districts of the state."[19] It has been estimated that prior to 1967, some ninety to ninety-five per cent of the monies to support public elementary and secondary education in the state came from the local property tax.

In 1963, the first state aid bill was drafted and presented to the

Legislature. It is generally recognized that two education groups, the Nebraska State Education Association and the Nebraska School Boards Association, provided the leadership in drafting and presenting this first attempt to gain state financial support for schools. This effort ultimately failed in the legislature by a vote of 8 to 31 but state aid to public schools had been "placed on the table" of the Unicameral. In 1965, the same two organizations again presented a proposal to the legislature for state aid, and, again, the measure was defeated but by a very narrow margin of 21 to 22. Obviously, the effort to gain state support for public education not only had been "placed on the table" but had generated a significant increase in support from state legislators. In 1967, the NSEA and NSBA, along with Leslie Chisholm, Professor of Educational Administration, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, and representatives of several of the larger school districts of the state joined together to present to the legislature a proposal for state aid and this time their efforts met with success as the Unicameral approved that proposal by a vote of 41-6. This proposal has become known as LB448, the School Foundation and Equalization Act of Nebraska. From 1967 to the present, several efforts have been made to modify the distribution formula and level of funding for LB448 and these attempts shall be discussed subsequently.

LB448 was initially funded in 1967 in the amount of $25 million and it was generally recognized that some $89 million was necessary, to fully fund the measure. As has been discussed earlier in this report, legislative processes in Nebraska provide for the enactment and funding of a legislative bill to be dealt with independently of each other thus allowing some legislators to declare that they had indeed supported LB448 but worked to control spending by limiting the allocation of monies to make the bill operative. In 1969, the Unicameral approved an appropriations measure which increased

state aid by $10 million, from $25 million to $35 million. During the 1973 legislative session, an additional $20 million of the state's Revenue Sharing Fund was added to the $35 million available to local school districts.

The Research Division of the National Education Association, in 1972, developed a comparison among states relative to the contributions of state and local government to revenue for public schools.[20] Given LB448 and a level of funding of some $35 million, the Report estimated that during the 1971-1972 school year 17.3 per cent of the revenue for public elementary and secondary schools of Nebraska came from the state government as compared with an average of 40.9 per cent in the U.S. and a high of 88.7 per cent for the state of Hawaii. This ranking placed Nebraska 48th among the 50 states with only South Dakota and New Hampshire providing a smaller percentage of revenue for public schools from the state coffers.

The Report also estimated that, during the same year, 76.3 per cent of revenue for public elementary and secondary schools in Nebraska came from local government sources as compared with an average of 52.0 per cent in the U.S. and the low of 2.9 per cent from local government in Hawaii. Within this dimension of school finance, Nebraska ranked 2nd nationally with only New Hampshire providing a larger percentage from local government--89.7 per cent. Again, using NEA statistics, Nebraska received 6.4 per cent of its revenue for public elementary and secondary schools from the federal government in 1971-72 compared to an average of 7.1 per cent in the U.S. and a high of 26.0 per cent in Mississippi. In this respect, Nebraska ranked thirty-third among the fifty states. From the preceding data, it can be concluded that public elementary and secondary schools of Nebraska receive a significantly smaller percentage of revenue from the state than the national

average and it can be generally inferred that much of the opposition to increasing the level of state funding emanates from a concern on the part of many Nebraskans to maintain "local control" over their schools. Responses from interviewees in Nebraska rather consistently suggested that efforts to increase the amount of state aid to elementary and secondary schools of Nebraska had met with failure due, in part at least, to a fear on the part of patrons that such an increase in support from the state would result in a loss of "local control" and "locally-made decisions" relative to school programming. Of perhaps equal concern to many was the higher income and sales taxes which would result from increased state aid to schools.

The NEA Report further suggests that Nebraska possesses "average" ability to support public elementary and secondary schools with a personal income per child of school age in 1970 of $14,319 compared with a United States average of $15,063 and a high of $19,758 in New York and a low of $8,354 in Mississippi. Given an almost average ability to support public education, the NEA Report further suggests that Nebraska falls considerably below the average in "effort" to support schools in terms of local and state revenue receipts for public schools in 1970-71 as a per cent of personal income. Nebraskans, during that year, allocated 4.0 per cent of personal income for local and state revenue for public schools compared with a United States average of 5.0 per cent and a high in Alaska of 7.7 per cent and a low of Alabama of 3.8 per cent. Nebraskans spent an additional 6.6 per cent of personal income for all other governmental services or a total of 10.6 per cent compared with a U.S. average of 10.9 and a high for all governmental services from state and local tax collections of 13.7 per cent in New York and a low of 8.6 per cent in Ohio.

Analyses of the NEA data suggests that Nebraskans possess "almost average" ability, based on personal income per school-age child, to support

public elementary and secondary education but have exerted something considerably less than average "effort" to do so, based on local and state revenue receipts for public schools as a per cent of personal income. When coupling effort to support public education with effort to support other governmental services, Nebraska moves much closer to the national average than in its effort to support public education alone. It appears appropriate to point out at this point that Nebraska law does not require lay approval of millage increases for school operating purposes. Local school district boards of education are allowed by law to determine such increases on the part of the board itself and efforts on the part of patrons to "hold down spending" are limited to voicing their opinions at budget hearings. At such budget hearings, patrons are afforded the opportunity to express their opinions but they have no opportunity to do so at the polls.

LB448. In addition to State Aid, the State of Nebraska provides direct financial aid to local school districts through four other distribution categories. These categories are:

(1) State Apportionment Funds--derived from several sources but primarily from the interest on Permanent School Fund bonds and from the lease rentals of "school lands";

(2) In lieu of School Land Tax Funds--distributed to schools on the basis of tax income lost due to the areas of non-taxable "school land" in each district. During the 1971-72 school year, Nebraska's public schools were still endowed with approximately 1.5 million acres of land originally set aside for their support under the terms of statehood in 1867;

(3) Insurance Premium Tax from the State--Revenue derived from a two per cent tax on the premiums of "foreign or alien" insurance companies which do business in the state. Thirty per cent of the tax collected is designated for distribution to school districts;

(4) State Appropriations--The legislature appropriates this money from the State General Fund and is distributed on the basis of qualified special programs such as driver education.

State aid is an additional distribution category. It is the major form of State school support and is derived from the State General Fund which is primarily secured from income and sales taxes.[21] The School Foundation and Equalization Act contains several criteria for determining a school district's entitlement:[22]

1. District class: Class I districts have a qualifying levy of 8 mills, Class II-V of 12 mills and Class VI of 5 mills.*

2. Assessed valuation: Local share of the "insured need"** is the product of the qualifying levy times the assessed valuation. The higher a district's assessed valuation, the greater the local share of the insured need.

3. Average Daily Membership (ADM) by grade level: Aid is allocated partially on the basis of membership by grade groups.

4. Staff Preparation: The Preparation of teachers by degree levels is recognized.

5. Program: The State Aid formula recognizes need for summer school, gifted pupil program, and deprived pupil programs.

6. Transportation: The State Aid program helps finance the transportation of pupils residing over four miles from school.

7. Population density: School districts with less than four people per square mile, located in a county with less than four people per square mile are recognized for additional aid ranging from a 10 per cent to 40 per cent increase in "insured need."

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*A Class I school district is one which maintains only elementary grades under the direction of a single school board. A Class II school district is one with one thousand or less population that maintains both elementary and secondary schools under the direction of a single school board. A Class III district has a population between one thousand and fifty thousand which maintains both elementary and secondary schools under the direction of one board of education. The Class IV district (Lincoln) is the same as a Class III district except population must be between fifty thousand and two hundred thousand. The Class V district is the same as Class III and IV except population must be two hundred thousand or greater. A Class VI district is any district in the state that maintains only a high school. "Qualifying levy" refers to the millage or tax rate of the local school district level required by the School Foundation and Equalization Act in the State program. It guarantees a level of local tax effort.

**Insured need is the basic amount used in the Act as the state recognized cost of education per regular ADM per year. It is used for calculation purposes in the "Equalization Aid" Section of the formula.

8. Increased membership· ADM numbers used in State Aid calculations are based on the previous year. If a district finds an enrollment increase of 5 per cent or more between September 25 of one year and September 24 of the next year the "insured need" is increased by the growth percentage.

Since the School Foundation and Equalization Act is not fully funded, the system of pro-rating available amounts is important. The system embodied in LB 448 gives first priority on funds to "Foundation Aid" which is a flat grant type aid following a fixed number of dollars per ADM regardless of need, local effort, or other factors. Second priority on funds goes to the staff preparation and summer school programs and third priority on funds goes to the equalization section of the State aid law. The system of priorities provides $12,950,000 to Foundation Aid, $2,800,000 to Staff and Summer School aid, and $19,250,000 to Equalization aid for a total of $35,000,000, the current level of funding.[23]

Hudson, in his study of school finance in Nebraska in 1971 identified two major weaknesses of LB 448, the School Foundation and Equalization Act: (1) a district's entitlement is reduced in the equalization section when the legislature does not provide for full funding and that partial funding causes a greater financial loss to poorer than to wealthier districts; (2) the use of arbitrary rather than experience cost figures per ADM and the resulting loss of equalization when true program cost values are not used. Hudson suggests that the Act's failure to achieve equalization is virtually complete without full funding.[24]

LB1377. In 1972, LB1377 was presented to the Unicameral for its consideration. LB1377 was developed with the assistance of the same education interest groups involved with LB448 and embodied major intentions of changing the distribution formula and increasing the number of dollars available to local school districts from the state. Proposed changes in the distribution included changing the qualifying levies of the various classes of school

districts, recognizing homestead or personal property tax exemptions, and reducing population-density aid considerations. Efforts to increase the total number of dollars available for schools centered around the proposition of providing a minimum of $50.00 per year for each pupil in average daily membership as compared with the range of state foundation support in LB448 of $17.50 per kindergarten ADM to $49.00 per grade 9-12 ADM. The sponsors of LB1377 estimated that some 160 million dollars would need to be appropriated by the legislature to fully fund LB1377. Sponsors of the bill generally purported that 1377 would provide two-thirds of support from sales and income taxes with a third left to property taxes and would have boosted the roles tax from 2.5 per cent to 4 or 5 per cent and the income tax by two or three per cent, while reducing property taxes.

When it became apparent to Governor J. J. Exon that LB1377 was moving toward final reading in the Unicameral, the Governor communicated his objections to the bill in a letter to the Honorable William H. Hasebroock, Speaker of the legislature and members of the Unicameral. The Governor's major objections to LB1377 rested in his perceptions that "LB1377 was primarily designed to aid education and only secondarily would (it) provide some property tax relief."[25] The Governor further believed that the bill would not limit property taxes, that there was essentially no control over the amount of money to be paid out under the bill and that to be funded at the level outlined, the bill would require sales and income tax increases greater than those suggested by the proponents of the bill. In his communication, Governor Exon suggested that "LB1377 would result in the greatest raid on the state treasury ever envisioned and that it would be a totally irrational position (on the part of the legislature) to turn over millions of state dollars to local governments with no review by the legislature or the executive branch, especially when those subdivisions of state government are allowed at least 6 per cent annual increases."[26]

The legislature, in spite of Governor Exon's warnings to them about the implications of the bill voted 35 to 14 to enact LB1377. At that point, the Governor believed that there existed no alternative but to veto LB1377 which he did. Obviously, the Governor did not believe that LB1377 was in keeping with his campaign pledge to "hold the line on spending" and to "bring about property tax relief."

The legislature's attempt to override the Governor's veto of LB1377 failed by a narrow margin. Nebraska statutes provided that LB448, the existing School Foundation and Equalization Act of 1967, remained intact as the state aid program for the elementary and secondary schools of the state. The Governor was successful in keeping his campaign promises to the voters of the state.

Many individuals and groups were involved in efforts to both support and oppose LB1377. It was generally considered by interview respondents that the NCSA, NSGA, and NSBA were especially active in working to gain support for the measure. The NSIA was identified as being actively involved in attempting to defeat the measure in the Unicameral and worked in support of the Governor's veto of LB1377 and against efforts to override the veto in the legislature.

The State Board of Education was unable to generate a "board decision" relative to LB1377. Although the recognized 4-4 split on the Board between "liberals and conservatives" precluded the development of a "board decision" either endorsing or opposing LB1377, it was reported that several State Board of Education members did, as individuals, testify at legislative hearings and did speak with legislators relative to the measure under consideration. One State Board respondent reported that the liberal element of the SBE supported an increase in state aid to approximately $160 million as provided for in LB1377 while the conservative element was supportive of a smaller

increase in the neighborhood of some $60 million. Apparently, according to this source, the major discord on the State Board of Education with reference to state aid was centered around the level to which the state aid would be increased rather than around the need for such an increase. As a result of the inability of the State Board to develop a stand on LB1377, the State Department Staff was precluded, in great part, from becoming involved with the measure except to provide data requested by the legislators.

Two of the major education groups supportive of LB1377, through some understanding of the Governor's position on the bill apparently, reported that they chose not to work through the Governor in their efforts to gain enactment. Instead, they chose to work directly with individual Senators.

Although the Commissioner of Education was identified generally as not playing an active role in deliberations surrounding LB1377, there did arise some minor conflict between the Governor and the Commissioner about the bill. Prior to the veto of the bill by Governor Exon, the Governor asked the Commissioner plus other staff members to attend a meeting with the Governor where he (the Governor) addressed himself to what he perceived as unworkable elements of the bill. It was reported that the Commissioner did agree with the Governor, at this meeting, that certain parts of the bill contained technical problems. The Governor then issued a public statement to the effect that the Commissioner disagreed with LB1377 and considered it to be unworkable. The Commissioner considered this announcement by the Governor's office to be a misunderstanding of his position and subsequently issued an announcement giving his support to LB1377.

Apparently, in an effort to override the Governor's veto of LB1377, some persons representing the education interest groups supportive of the measure, agreed to support certain tax exemption measures in the Unicameral in exchange for the support from tax groups for LB1377. Such tax exemptions

represented a loss of some $24 million from the total assessed valuation of the State. The support for the tax exemptions from the education interest groups resulted in the approval of those exemptions by the Unicameral. However, the tax group support for LB1377 never did materialize as expected and the legislature failed to generate sufficient strength to override the Governor's veto. Obviously, the education interest groups had gambled and lost in their "exchange of support" agreement.

Comments relative to the roles of various individuals and groups in the consideration of LB1377 included:

--There were no enduring alignments among or between groups on 1377. The situation kept changing.

--The question of local control and state aid, as far as the rural communities are concerned, is a tax question. Any tax shift has implications for local rural school districts.

--Education groups are unified on more state aid but are not worried about how it is raised.

--The veto of 1377 improved relations between the Governor's office and educational organizations because it forced these groups and the Governor's staff to communicate.

--NSIA worked closely with non-educational groups on the state aid bill. NSIA members are also members of Chambers of Commerce, Stock Growers, Farmer's Unions, Farm Bureaus, etc. The NSIA is the melting pot of all the farm groups. Members get information from the NSIA and this information affects the role those members play in the other organizations they belong to.

--LB1377 got so involved with tax exemptions that many unlikely coalitions formed to support or oppose the bill. LB1377 did not pass or fail on its merits but was decided on pressure put on by interest groups. Trade-offs between farm groups and education groups, who usually take opposite sides on issues, occurred.

--The Republican Party and NSIA were against increased state aid because they feared loss of local control. Local control in the rural areas of Nebraska means keeping property taxes down. The parochial schools wanted to avoid an increase in sales and income tax for Catholic parents who send their children to Catholic schools and have to pay tuition. The Catholic hierarchy feared the increase in taxes to support more state aid to public schools would force Catholic parents to send their children to public schools. In exchange for parochial support opposing increased

state aid, the NSIA and the right wing of the Republican Party supported parochial efforts to obtain textbooks and transportation from the State for the Catholic schools. The NSEA, NSBA, and NCSA were for increased state aid and opposed any support for parochial schools.

In the 1974 legislative session, LB772 was enacted by the legislature to provide for greater state sharing in the cost of public elementary and secondary education. This bill was vetoed by Governor Exon but the legislature was successful in overriding that veto. A petition drive to place repeal of LB772 on the ballot in November 1974, was organized by opponents of the bill. LB772, as enacted, is designed to provide state support for approximately 50 per cent of the cost of operating the elementary and secondary schools of the state. LB772 was enacted just prior to the publication of this study, consequently, it is mentioned as a point of information, but no attempts have been made to study and/or present the dynamics of the legislative approval and veto override.

Teacher Certification

Prior to the middle 1960s, the Nebraska legislature reserved the authority to establish rules and regulations for the certification of teachers and administrators in Nebraska. The State Board of Education and the State Department of Education was charged only with the responsibility of interpreting such rules and regulations and issuing the appropriate certificates to qualified applicants. During the middle 1960s, at the urging of the NSEA, NSBA, PTA, and the University of Nebraska, the Unicameral passed legislation providing for a constitutional amendment to place the authority with the State Board of Education. This move was opposed by the State Board and the Nebraska School Improvement Association. Such opposition proved fruitless as the voters of Nebraska gave their support to the amendment.

The State Board of Education accepted its responsibility for establishing the rules and regulations for certification primarily through the

establishment of two committees to deal with certification issues: (1) the Certification Advisory Committee and (2) the College Approval Advisory Committee. Although both committees are appointed by the State Board of Education and as such are creatures of the State Board, both committees are also accepted as standing committees of the Nebraska Council on Teacher Education. The NCTE is a voluntary association of agencies and institutions in the state organized to facilitate a unified, cooperative attack on the difficult and persistent problems involved in improving teacher education and certification standards.

The Certification Advisory Committee. This Committee is composed of representatives of the various school administrators, elementary and secondary school teachers, school board members, county superintendents, university and state colleges involved with teacher personnel education programs. The Committee consists of thirteen members who are appointed by the SBE. The function of this Committee is to recommend to the State Board of Education, for its consideration and approval, any changes in the rules and regulations for the certification of teachers and administrators in the schools of Nebraska. By statute, this Committee must present to the public, in the form of public hearings, all proposed changes in certification rules and regulations as proposed by the Committee to the State Board of Education.

The College Approval Advisory Committee. This Committee consists of twenty-one members appointed by the SBE. The Committee consists of representatives from each of the institutions of higher education in the state approved to provide training programs for teachers and administrators, the Nebraska State Education Association, the school boards of the state, and the State Department of Education. The major responsibility of this Committee is to evaluate teacher education programs in Nebraska colleges and universities and to make recommendations to the State Board of Education

concerning the approval of institution and of undergraduate and advanced teacher education programs in those institutions. Such a responsibility is consistent with a change that occurred in Nebraska in 1963 when a "program approval approach" for teacher education programs and an endorsement concept for certification were adopted. Given the rules and regulations for certification as promulgated by the Certification Advisory Committee and the State Board of Education, it becomes the responsibility of this Committee to evaluate and recommend for State Board approval, newly developed training programs in colleges and universities and to monitor approved training programs to assure sustained adherence to the rules and regulations for approval. Each institution of higher education with approved teacher and administrator training programs may anticipate an evaluation by the College Approval Advisory Committee every four years relative to the institution's continuing to serve as an "approved" training institution. Theoretically, persons graduating from an institution without an approved program in various of the training areas would not be in position to receive certification from the State to function professionally.

Certification of teachers and administrators was not generally recognized by persons interviewed during this study as an issue of major proportion at this time. Apparently, the State Board of Education has been quite willing to accept and implement the recommendations of the two Committees with very few exceptions.

Of rather indirect, but possibly significant importance, is the impact of increasing certification requirements upon the smaller schools of the State. Approximately two years ago, the Rules and Regulations for the Accreditation of Public and Non-Public School Systems of Nebraska were changed to require that seventy-five per cent of the teachers in a school system's grades 9

through 12 must be assigned to teach in their area of specialization as endorsed upon their teaching and supervisory and administrative certificate. As standards have changed to increase the requirements for gaining endorsement through certification in the multiple-grade level or subject-matter areas, small schools with limited specific subject-matter enrollments have found it increasingly difficult to find and hire teachers with more than one area of endorsement on their teaching certificate. Smaller schools have sometimes found it necessary to increase expenditures for teacher salaries to provide "endorsed" teachers in the various subject-matter areas for extremely limited numbers of students.

The fact that a school district or system in Nebraska does not have to be accredited, but only approved, in order to continue to operate or to qualify for any state funds at the present time diminishes the strength of the accreditation standards. However, as pointed out in the Foreword of the 1971 revised Rules and Regulations for the Accreditation of Public and Non-Public School Systems, "Parents and their children, and rightly so, want to know which school systems provide comprehensive programs, which have staff well-qualified for positions held, and which have appropriate instructional materials and equipment."[27]

Educational Planning and Evaluation

In 1969, the Nebraska Legislature approved LB959. Section D of this bill stated that the Nebraska State Board of Education should: "Institute a statewide system of testing to determine the degree of achievement and accomplishment of all the students within the state's school systems, if it determines that such testing would be advisable." This permissive legislation sufficiently moved the State Board of Education to develop, in 1970, the following policy statement relative to a statewide assessment of goals:

> We believe that the goals of education for Nebraska should be described in a statement jointly derived by patrons and educators; that goals thus derived will reflect the differing educational needs of all youths and adults; that measuring progress toward the goals through a statewide system of testing can help determine achievement and accomplishments; that statewide testing results can be used in making decisions about education; and that the results can be used to guide the continuing re-examination of the educational goals for Nebraska.[28]

In an effort to develop the educational goals for Nebraska, the State Department of Education organized some thirty-six "listening posts" or conferences throughout the state where patrons, under the leadership provided by the State Department staff members, provided input relative to such statewide educational goals. Such efforts resulted in the following educational goal statements for Nebraskans approved by the State Board of Education in June, 1971:

EDUCATIONAL
GOAL STATEMENTS FOR NEBRASKANS

I. Each Student Should:

Possess the skills necessary for learning in any situation, and prepare to learn continuously at his own direction.

Select appropriate resources and logical processes in solving problems.

Respect the total range of vocations and recognize their requirements and rewards.

Demonstrate a knowledge of and respect for the human body and its functions.

Understand and respect a variety of governmental systems, and be prepared to participate in his own.

Have knowledge of and skill in those leisure activities which will be available when he ends his formal schooling.

Be prepared to be a responsible member of a family as well as other groups.

Realize that every person is handicapped in some manner, and willingly adjust for handicaps in others as well as himself.

Develop his special intellectual and creative abilities.

Recognize his own personal worth and dignity and that of every individual.

Function within society according to a personal system of values.

Be involved in the decisions which help to create his educational experience.

Share the responsibility for protection and improvement of both his social and natural world.

Recognize and respect differences in cultures around the world and around his community.

II. Each Educator Should:

Develop and provide learning experiences which are meaningful to the world of today's students.

Work to insure that every educational experience is learner centered and success oriented.

Seek to create programs which benefit the entire community, and make use of its resources.

Involve both students and the community in planning for educational decision making.

Initiate and maintain open communication with the entire community.

III. Each Nebraskan Should:

Contribute a proportional share of the resources necessary for education in Nebraska.

Have the necessary educational resources available to him, regardless of circumstances.

Participate in educational planning, and the development of education goals.

IV. Each Institution Should:

Systematically account for both the resources it expends and the results it achieves.

Plan with and serve as many of the people in the area it covers as possible.

Make its special abilities and resources available to other instituti ns or individuals.

Seek to identify and meet the individual needs of the complete range of people that it is responsible for serving.

Whereas LB959 provided permissive legislation relative to accountability, a mandatory accountability measure was introduced in the Education Committee of the Unicameral in 1972 but was killed by that Committee by a vote of 5 to 1. Legislative observers credit the failure of this bill to move out of the Education Committee to the fact that the State Board of Education and State Department of Education had already moved on the accountability issue as discussed previously.

State Board of Education adoption of the educational goals led to a host of actions on the part of State Department of Education personnel. Professional staff began to examine the functions they were performing in relation to the goal statements. The policies of the State Board of Education were examined for possible modifications based on the goals. Professional discussions were held statewide to derive criteria for determining goal attainment and evaluation techniques were searched and researched for adaptation to a process of measuring achievement. The State Department of Education began to work to provide technical assistance to local school districts in developing local goal statements. Indications of success levels in achieving the educational goals were not available at the time field visits for this study were conducted.

Two interviewees suggested that the demand for statewide assessment and "accountability" came from the Nebraska School Improvement Association which had stated: "Kids learn more in the country schools than in the town schools and all that's needed to prove this is some type of testing procedure or device." This effort on the part of the NSIA was perceived by the two respondents as being related to the Association's concern to protect local school district autonomy among the smaller schools of the state.

One respondent suggested that the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education felt compelled to begin to work with a state assessment program although the State Department staff was "not convinced that goal setting was important and therefore the SDE staff 'slacked off' in its efforts." Another respondent suggested that the "State Department dragged that assessment thing out for a couple years" and this respondent further dismissed the whole Nebraska assessment program as not very important.

Obviously, Nebraska had not escaped the demands for accountability in its schools as experienced by various of the other states. The rationale underlying such demands remains somewhat hidden and the degree of commitment for the schools to be accountable remains uncertain at this point in time.

Desegregation

Efforts were made to determine the extent to which the "desegregation of schools" was seen as a statewide educational policy issue area. Respondents indicated that Nebraskans do not generally consider this as a "statewide" issue with which the various actors included in this study have been directly involved. Interview respondents consistently indicated that desegregation was essentially a "local" issue involving the Lincoln and Omaha School Systems. Apparently, the legislature, the State Board of Education, and the State Department of Education have not felt compelled to view desegregation as an issue of sufficient magnitude to demand their attention. Moreover, the various education interest groups reported no involvement in this area.

SECTION IV: SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

Preceding discussions indicate rather clearly that attempts to gain "power" in statewide educational policy development in Nebraska have been centered primarily within the State Board of Education and the Governor's office. Since the late 1960s until the present time, this "power" has been manifested in a State Board of Education which has changed from "liberal to conservative, to a liberal-conservative split, to liberal," and with a change from a liberal Governor (Tiemann) to a conservative Governor (Exon). The power of the Chief State School Officer to influence policy development at the state level has been generally described as minimal. One might also conclude that members of the Unicameral, for the most part, have been reluctant to become too deeply involved in educational issues. Apparently, the people of Nebraska identify with the State Board of Education as a potentially powerful body given the interests of both the conservative and liberal elements of the state to gain majority membership within that group. The power of the Governor's office was clearly manifested in his ability to veto LB1377 and the reluctance of the Unicameral to become too deeply involved with educational issues was apparent in its inability to override the Governor's veto. The more liberal education interest groups (NCSA, NSEA, NSBA) apparently lacked the strength to persuade the Unicameral to override the veto of LB1377 while the conservative education interest group (NSIA) was obviously successful in supporting a conservative gubernatorial candidate (Exon) and supporting his campaign pledge to "hold the line on spending and bring about property tax relief" in the state and the subsequent veto of attempts to increase state aid to schools.

While, as suggested above, the CSSO was seen as having little influence in the development of educational policy, certain conditions in the situation

should be noted. During much of the time covered by this study the State Board of Education was divided into two opposing factions. This division alone meant that the Commissioner could give little leadership to policy questions. Regardless of which position he took, or might have taken, a major faction on the Board was opposed to the proposal. In the end the Commissioner was forced to deal with operational problems or "holding things together" and not with policy leadership. This condition seemed to reinforce a commonly accepted tradition in Nebraska that no great policy initiatives were expected from the CSSO. In any case we have here a classic example of how a split board can immobilize the chief executive.

Within recent years, the major issue area in Nebraska has been school finance with teacher certification and educational planning and evaluation considered to be lesser issues and desegregation declared as virtually not a statewide issue at all. Although school district reorganization surfaced as a major issue area in the late 1960s, it has been down-played in recent years and has not commanded the attention of the State Board of Education or legislature to any great extent since that time.

The rural-conservative elements of the state have worked consistently and quite successfully to maintain local control of their schools through their opposition to increased state aid and school district reorganization. These groups have been less successful in their opposition to increasing teacher certification requirements and accreditation standards. However, these two issues have been of lesser importance to the rural-conservative elements in that participation in the state-aid distribution program and the ability of a local school district to continue operations are not dependent upon the accreditation of those local school districts. Although the rural-conservative groups have been unable to maintain majority membership on the State Board of Education, their alliance with and support of the

present Governor has enabled them to successfully oppose what they consider to be attempts to destroy the local autonomy of the schools of the state.

The liberal element of the state has succeeded in gaining majority membership on the State Board of Education at the present time, but was unsuccessful in its efforts, primarily through the Unicameral, to reduce the strength of a conservative Governor with veto power in 1972. The veto of the Governor was overriden in 1974.

Future decisions relative to statewide educational issues in Nebraska supportive of either the conservative of liberal elements will, in large part, be determined by the ability of either of these two groups to gain or maintain majority membership on the State Board of Education and the election or re-election of a Governor supportive of their views. For the most part, neither the conservative nor liberal element, since the late 1960s, has enjoyed the support of both the State Board of Education and the Governor's office at one time.

FOOTNOTES

[1]"Industry in Nebraska," Nebraskaland: Where the West Begins, published by the Department of Economic Development, not dated, p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Michael Barone, Grant Unifusa, and Douglas Matthews, The Almanac of American Politics (Gambit, 1972), p. 453.

[4]Figures taken from Official Report of the Board of State Canvassers of the State of Nebraska, compiled by the Secretary of the State, 1972, p. 2.

[5]Nebraska Legislative Council, Nebraska Blue Book 1972 (Lincoln, Nebraska: Joe Christenson, Inc., 1972), p. 345.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Joseph Schlesinger, "The Politics of the Executive," Politics in the American States, H. Jacob and K. Vines, editors (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971), pp. 210-237.

[9]The League of Women Voters of Nebraska, "The House That Nebraska Built," Facts (July, 1968), p. 1.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]George Peterson, "Drafter's Job: To See That Law Fits In," Nebraska's Unicameral, School of Journalism, University of Nebraska, 1970, p. 78.

[13]Leon Nyberg, "Are There Checks and Balances?" Nebraska's Unicamerial, School of Journalism, University of Nebraska, 1970, p. 74.

[14]The Annual Report of the State Board of Education to the Governor of the State of Nebraska, Nebraska Education, 1971, p. 19.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Annual Report to the Governor, p. 24.

[17]Ibid., p. 25.

[18]Hudson, C. Cale, Understanding Public School Finance in Nebraska, (Lincoln, Nebraska: Bureau of Educational Research and Field Services, Department of Educational Administration, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1971), p. 1.

[19]Ibid., p. 10.

[20]Ranking of the States, Research Division, National Education Association, Washington, D.C. 1972, pp. 36-52.

[21]Hudson, op. cit., p. 13.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 14.

[24]Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[25]J. James Exon, Copy of a letter addressed to the Honorable William H. Hasebroock, Speaker of the Legislature and Members of the Legislature, March 22, 1972.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Stanley, Cecil E., Commissioner of Education, Rules and Regulations For The Accreditation of Public and Non-Public School Systems, (Lincoln, Nebraska: State Department of Education, Revised July 1, 1971), Foreword.

[28]Stanley, Cecil E., Commissioner of Education, Accountability in Education, A Review of Ten Educational Concerns Prepared For The Nebraska State Committee, Education Commission of States, (Lincoln, Nebraska: Nebraska State Department of Education, June, 1970).